

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Children in Spain relish outdoor hour

By JOSEPH WILSON and GEIR MOULSON
Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain — Shrieks of joy rang out in the streets of Spain as children were allowed to go outside and play Sunday for first time in six weeks, while people in Italy and France were eager to hear their leaders' plans for easing some of the world's strictest coronavirus lockdowns.

"This is wonderful! I can't believe it has been six weeks," Susana Sabate, a mother of 3-year-old twin boys, said in Barcelona. "My boys are very active. Today when they saw the front door and we gave them their scooters, they were thrilled."

Wary of igniting new infection flare-ups, nations have been taking divergent paths on how and when to reopen their economies after weeks at a standstill.

The official death toll from the virus topped 200,000 worldwide, with 2.9 million confirmed infections, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Those figures understate the enormity of the crisis, because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and some governments' efforts to underplay their outbreaks.

SEE OUTDOOR ON PAGE 7



EMILIO MORENATTI/AP

Brothers sit near the beach in Barcelona, Spain, Sunday, as children under 14 years old were allowed to take limited walks with a parent for up to one hour, ending six weeks of complete seclusion.

MILITARY

Army moving forward with plans for summer troop rotations

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PACIFIC

Mystery surrounding location of N. Korean leader deepens

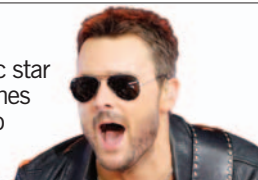
Page 5



FACES

Country music star Church preaches safety in video

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MIDEAST



Ready to deliver

US gunships prepared to make good on Trump's warning to Iran

By TONY CAPACIO
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — Even before President Donald Trump's vow to "shoot down" Iranian speedboats if they harass American ships in international waters, the U.S. Navy was bolstering its ability to call in AC-130 gunships and Apache attack helicopters to defend its presence in the Persian Gulf.

A practice run for the new tactics on April 15 drew 11 gunboats from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps that crossed the bows and stems of American vessels at close range. And that prompted Trump's tweet on April 22 saying he'd "instructed the United States Navy to shoot down and destroy

'I have instructed the United States Navy to shoot down and destroy any and all Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea.'

President Donald Trump
Tuesday morning on Twitter

any and all Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea."

Going back to the Obama administration, Revolutionary Guard members in small but agile speedboats have harassed U.S. ships, but the encounters usually have ended with warnings from the Americans to back off. As far back as 2007, the Office of Naval Intelligence estimated Iran had a fleet of

1,000 small boats that was growing. In early January 2017 a U.S. Navy guided-missile naval destroyer fired warning shots at four Iranian rapid-attack craft in the Strait of Hormuz.

While attention has turned on the latest confrontation at sea between Iran and the U.S. — and on Trump's vow to

SEE DELIVER ON PAGE 6

The U.S. Navy has bolstered its ability to call in AC-130 gunships like the one pictured to "essentially strafe" Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' small, agile gunboats, part of an effort to show U.S. forces can go on the offensive against Iranian small boats, rather than simply defending against them.

ERICA ENGBLOM/U.S. Air Force

Boeing ends deal, angering Brazilian jet maker

"We believe Boeing has engaged in a systematic pattern of delay and repeated violations of the MTA (master transaction agreement), because of its unwillingness to complete the transaction in light of its own financial condition and 737 Max and other business and reputational problems," it added.

Military rates		Swiss franc (Franc).....	
Euro costs (April 27).....	\$1.05	0.5443	
Dollar buys (April 27).....	40.9035		
British pound (April 27).....	\$1.20		
Japanese yen (April 27).....	105.50		
Mark (April 27).....	1.9363		
Commercial rates		Military exchange rates	
British (Dinar).....	0.3781		
Bahrain.....	\$1.2332		
Canada (Dollar).....	1.4980		
China (Yuan).....	6.5593		
Danmark (Krone).....	6.4605		
Euro (Pound).....	1.5790		
Hong Kong (Dollar).....	7.7504		
Japanese (Forint).....	329.33		
Israel (Sheqel).....	1.8037		
Japan (Yen).....	107.53		
Korea (Won).....	106.78		
Norway (Krone).....	10.6476		
Philippines (Peso).....	50.79		
Poland (Zloty).....	10.3367		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal).....	3.7608		
Singapore (Dollar).....	1.4255		
South Korea (Won).....	106.78		
Taiwan (Dollar).....	1.4255		
Thailand (Baht).....	5.9463		
Turkey (Lira).....	6.3789		

The military exchange rates are the rates available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for noncommercial purposes. The commercial rates are the rates in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For noncommercial purposes, the U.S. military purchases British pounds in Germany, using their own local military banking facilities. The exchange rates are interest rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies converted to U.S. dollars. The exchange rates which are represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro, and

INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate.....	3.25
Discount rate.....	2.50
Federal funds market rate.....	0.05
3-month bill.....	0.05
90-day bill.....	0.05

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.25
Federal funds market rate	0.05
3-month bill	0.11
30-year bond	1.18

Map of Japan and surrounding regions showing weather data for various cities. The map includes labels for China, Russia, N. Korea, S. Korea, Japan, Okinawa, and Guam. Weather data is provided for Seoul, Osan, Busan, Sasebo, Okinawa, Misawa, Tokyo, and Guam. The data is presented as a ratio of two numbers, likely representing different weather metrics.

Location	Weather Data (Ratio)
Seoul	62/38
Osan	62/39
Busan	62/45
Sasebo	60/50
Okinawa	69/64
Misawa	50/38
Tokyo	55/45
Guam	83/79

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center and 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

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MILITARY



PHOTOS BY KYLE COPE/U.S. Air Force

An F-16 Fighting Falcon assigned to the 52nd Fighter Wing at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, gets a water salute Thursday after completing 10,000 flight hours. The F-16 was the first in Europe, and only the second in the U.S. Air Force's inventory, to cross the 10,000 flight-hour mark.

F-16 jet at Spangdahlem first in Europe to hit 10,000 flight hours

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

An F-16 combat jet at Spangdahlem Air Base achieved a landmark 10,000 flight hours Thursday, nearly 27 years after it rolled off the production line and began flying for the 52nd Fighter Wing.

The aircraft — Tail No. 343 — is the first Block 50 Fighting Falcon in Europe and only the second F-16 in the U.S. Air Force's inventory to reach the historic milestone, something maintainers hailed as a testament to its durability and their dedicated labor.

An F-16 at Misawa Air Base in northern Japan hit the mark a year ago, but that jet was delivered a year earlier than Spangdahlem's, maintainers said. It also took 26 years and 11 months to reach 10,000 hours — two months longer than No. 343.

"It takes a lot of work and a lot of diligence and a lot of very thorough inspections to keep (the aircraft) safe and ready to fly," said Senior Master Sgt. Andrew Yates of the 480th Aircraft Maintenance Unit at Spangdahlem. "The plane's been flying since before about 75% of the people in this building were even born — definitely before any of us even joined the military," he said.

Both are true for 1st Lt. Christina Nunley, 25, the assistant officer in charge of the 480th AMU. "This aircraft has been at Spangdahlem longer than I have been alive," she said. "Obviously, there are struggles that come with having an older aircraft, but the history behind it is a huge motivating factor and it's something that we take a lot of pride in."

Chief Master Sgt. Chris Yager, 45, is part of that history. His first assignment out of tech school in 1997 was at Spangdahlem, where he worked on the jet and saw it reach 2,000 flight hours.

Back then, "there were those old crusty guys that were out there training me how to work on aircraft and sometimes I wondered why they were training me the way they were," said Yager,



U.S. Air Force Col. Jason Hokaj, 52nd Fighter Wing vice commander, prepares for takeoff in aircraft 343, an F-16 Fighting Falcon, at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany.

the 52nd Maintenance Group superintendent.

With Thursday's milestone, Yager said he sees "the fruits of that labor."

Keeping No. 343 airworthy involved about 190,000 hours of work by ground crews, maintainers said. The F-16 on average requires 19 hours of maintenance for every hour of flying time — a figure that includes thorough inspections, refueling and basic maintenance such as changing tires and oil.

The wing's vice commander, Col. Jason Hokaj, took the jet up Thursday afternoon for less than an hour to reach the milestone. Base firefighters hosed down the aircraft as it taxied down the flightline after landing.

"This is such an amazing event to be part of," Hokaj said in a statement. "To think about the amount of hands and minds used to get here, to keep this machine flying, it's a testament to the professionalism of the 52nd Maintenance Group."

The Lockheed Martin Block 50 F-16s that the 480th Fighter Squadron flies were initially designed to last 8,000 flight hours, Yates said. But a series of upgrades have kept many of them

going past that mark, he said.

Yager likened the F-16 to the Air Force's Cold War-era B-52 bomber, which is still in service after more than 50 years.

"It was only designed for so many hours but it keeps going and going," he said.

Lockheed Martin's F-35A Lightning II is the planned replacement for the F-16 across the service, but due to delays in the program, the F-16s are expected to receive service-life extension upgrades to keep them airworthy until 2048 and beyond.

No. 343 was part of the 480th's deployment for Operation Inherent Resolve to Iraq and Syria in 2016 when the squadron broke a record for number of munitions dropped by an F-16 unit within a six-month period.

"It's just been a good, durable aircraft," Yates said. "There's a lot of superstition in the maintenance community — rubbing the bellies and certain things — but really, the biggest reason is ... making sure all the required inspections for this aircraft are complied with."

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Army announces plans for summer troop rotations

By JOHN VANDIER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The Army is moving forward with plans for summer troop rotations to Europe, Iraq and Afghanistan even as the military grapples with the disruptive effects of the global coronavirus pandemic, the service announced Thursday.

The announcement came days after the Pentagon issued the latest version of a sweeping stop-movement order, aimed at stemming the spread of the coronavirus among troops. The latest order, which is scheduled to last through June 30, allows senior service officials to grant exemptions for service members whose new assignments are deemed essential to the Defense Department's overall mission.

Headed to Iraq are the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., as part of a regular rotation of forces to support the ongoing campaign against Islamic State.

"Our paratroopers are honored to answer our nation's call to deploy and work alongside the international coalition in support of Operation Inherent Resolve," said Col. Jason Curl, commander of the 2nd BCT, in a statement.

The 4th Security Forces Assistance Brigade out of Fort Carson in Colorado will head to Afghanistan to replace the 3rd Security Forces Assistance Brigade.

SEAFAs, specialized Army units launched three years ago, are designed to provide higher-end training to partners. In Afghanistan, they have also been involved in combat operations.

"The 4th Security Forces Assistance Brigade is ready to advise, support, liaise and assess our partnered foreign security forces in the CENTCOM AOR," said Brig. Gen. Mark H. Landes, head of Security Force Assistance Command.

The 4th Infantry Division Combat Aviation Brigade, stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., also is headed to Afghanistan as part of Operation Freedom Sentinel.

And the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, will deploy to Kuwait as part of a regular rotation focused on maintaining ready forces in the greater Middle East.

Among troops heading to Europe is the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, stationed at Fort Stewart, Ga., which will be part of the Pentagon's Atlantic Resolve campaign, focused on deterring

'We have trained for many months to prepare to serve in Europe and we are excited to work directly with our allies.'

Maj. Gen. Jeffery Broadwater
1st Cavalry Division commander

Russian aggression. They will replace the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, currently on rotation in Poland and locations along NATO's eastern flank.

Overseeing the Atlantic Resolve campaign will be the 1st Cavalry Division Headquarters out of Fort Hood, Texas, which will deploy to Poznan, Poland, this summer, the Army said.

"We have trained for many months to prepare to serve in Europe and we are excited to work directly with our allies and partners to deter potential threats," said 1st Cavalry Division commander, Maj. Gen. Jeffery Broadwater, in a statement.

The 101st Airborne Division Combat Aviation Brigade stationed at Fort Campbell, Ky., is also bound for Europe to replace the 3rd Infantry Division Combat Aviation Brigade, U.S. Army Europe said in a statement. The statement did not specify where on the Continent the 101st would be based.

Deployments to the Middle East are between six and 13 months' duration, while rotations to Europe typically last nine months. Most of the movements to Europe announced last week are for missions in Poland, where troops are focused on training with allies along NATO's eastern flank. The summer moves were announced as the Pentagon continues to make wide-ranging adjustments, including canceling exercises and delaying troop movements, to try to curb the spread of the coronavirus. Some units, such as the 82nd Airborne Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team, which was rushed to Kuwait after Christmas amid escalating tensions with Iran, have had their deployments extended as the coronavirus pandemic led to widespread restrictions on civilian and military movement around the world.

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MILITARY

Internet firms lower fees at some US bases

By JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

Some internet providers at U.S. military bases are slashing overhead fees or providing free service to troops in lockdown or quarantine due to the coronavirus.

Americable, which serves bases in Japan, announced April 17 it would reduce overhead fees from \$12.50 to \$6.25 for every 50 gigabytes beyond the limits on customers' data plans in April

and May.

The announcement followed the surge in internet traffic after students were sent home from school and base workers began teleworking in March and April.

The changes affect Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Yokosuka Naval Base, Naval Air Station Atsugi and Sasebo Naval Base, where peak traffic hours now last an entire day instead of in the evening or on weekends, said James Smith, president of

Americable International Inc., in an email Friday to Stars and Stripes.

"In a typical month, between 8-10% of customers exceed the data limits for their subscribed plan," he said. "However, had we not waived the overage fees last month that number would have been much higher."

Boingo, another internet service provider for service members in the United States, Japan and South Korea, is offering

broadband service for free to those living in quarantine barracks, said spokeswoman Melody Walker in an emailed statement on Wednesday. This free service covers more than 7,000 beds.

"Boingo is, and always has been, an unlimited data service provider — we don't have data caps, charge late fees, install fees or cancellation fees," she said.

Smith, in his April 17 letter to customers that was shared over base-affiliated social media ac-

counts, reminded service members and their families that Americable's service is a finite resource constrained by bandwidth availability.

Echoing the requests of base commanders, he implored customers to limit their screen time and to log onto their accounts regularly to monitor their usage to ensure everyone stays within their limits.

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Photos by Michael Maguire

A company run by a former Air Force medic, AirMid Critical Care Products, pitched an idea for manual ventilator, shown in this artistic rendering, and won a \$100,000 prize announced Friday.

Former USAF medic a winner in Army's contest for ventilators

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

A company run by a former Air Force medic is one of two winners of an Army contest to find low-cost, easily manufactured ventilators to help with shortages caused by the coronavirus pandemic, a statement from the service said Friday.

Michael Maguire's company AirMid Critical Care Products, Inc. pitched an idea for a manual, bellows-based ventilator and won a \$100,000 award for further research, Diane Pollard, a spokeswoman with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, told Stars and Stripes.

Spiro Devices, LLC, also received a \$100,000 prize through the xTech COVID-19 Ventilator Challenge, an Army contest begun in early April that sought pitches for ventilators similar to the show "Shark Tank."

Some 150 companies have pitched ideas so far and sent in three-minute videos for review by panels of experts, Pollard said.

The contest started after reports of widespread ventilator shortages in COVID-19 response efforts, said Matthew Willis, the Army's director for laboratory management.



Artistic rendering of manual ventilator

"The Army recognizes there is a crisis, there was a demand for readily-manufactured, easy-to-produce ventilators," Willis told Stars and Stripes in mid-April. "We wanted to put out this prize competition as a way to identify and potentially solicit new and novel ideas."

The contest had two phases, with those getting to the pitch stage winning \$5,000 and selected pitches receiving \$100,000 and an invitation to develop a prototype.

The competition continues and others can receive prizes if their ideas have merit, Willis said.

The award will help accelerate development of a prototype, said Maguire, the CEO of AirMid Critical Care Products, Inc.

The D.C.-based company's idea adds a control mechanism

to manual ventilators, which are hand-pumped and often used by first responders.

A COVID-19 patient with infected lungs, after being picked up by a first responder, will often be placed on a manual air pump until they can get to a mechanical ventilator located at a hospital, Maguire said.

But due to shortages, mechanical ventilators may be far away or unavailable, meaning the patient may have to be on a manual ventilator for a long time. These ventilators, because they are hand-pumped, risk errors and over-inflation of the lungs, with deadly results, he said.

The solution, Maguire said, is a manual pump that is portable, but has controls on how much air is put into a patient's lungs similar to a hospital's mechanical ventilator.

"It projects a level of safety that is only available today in mechanical ventilators, to a manual device so you can ventilate safely from the very first breath," Maguire said.

The finished product would sell for less than \$3,000, and he hopes it can be used by both the military and civilians, Maguire said.

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Officials: Germany won't be buying US jets before 2022

By KARIN ZEITVOGEL
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Germany has not committed to buying 45 American jets to replace some of its Tornado fighter-bombers, the country's top defense official said last week amid accusations that she formally indicated to the Pentagon that the multibillion-dollar deal would go ahead.

"No decision has been taken (on which planes will be chosen) and, in any case, the (defense) ministry can't take that decision — only parliament can," Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer told reporters after a 90-minute, closed-door meeting with a parliamentary defense committee Wednesday.

Kramp-Karrenbauer has been under fire since a report in Der Spiegel newsmagazine Sunday said she sent Defense Secretary Mark Esper an email recently, announcing that Germany planned to buy 30 Boeing F/A-18E/F Super Hornets and 15 EA-18G Growlers to replace 45 of its Panavia Tornados, which have been in service since the 1970s.

Some in the political opposition have questioned whether the email was a formal declaration of Germany's intent to purchase the American planes, media reports said.

Kramp-Karrenbauer said the defense ministry has only suggested that Germany purchase the 45 Boeing planes along with 93 Eurofighter Typhoons, made by a consortium of European companies.

"The suggestion that we purchase Eurofighters ... and a much smaller number of F-18s is a compromise that will allow us to make

new planes available to the Luftwaffe," or German air force, by 2030, when the Tornado is due to be taken out of service.

The replacement aircraft must "seamlessly" fill the aging Tornado's dual role, serving as a fighter-bomber in conventional warfare and maintaining the capability to carry U.S. nuclear bombs as required by NATO, Kramp-Karrenbauer said.

The ministry is in preliminary talks with Airbus and Boeing so that a decision could be possible during the 2022-23 legislative period, Kramp-Karrenbauer said.

The Super Hornets have been selected to be part of the package since "only U.S. manufacturers are offering" the capacity to carry nuclear weapons, as required under NATO's nuclear-sharing terms, Kramp-Karrenbauer told the Sueddeutsche Zeitung on Tuesday.

The Tornados are currently the only planes in the German air force certified by NATO to carry U.S. nuclear bombs.

Although none of the jets in the running to replace the Tornado are dual-capability aircraft, the U.S. government told the Germans that Boeing's fighter could be certified more rapidly than the Typhoon to carry the U.S. B61 nuclear gravity bomb, media reports said last month.

The Tornado's replacement would be a stopgap measure before the planned introduction in the next decade of the Future Combat Air System, a sixth-generation multrole jet made by a consortium of French, Spanish and German companies.

Stars and Stripes reporters Marcus Kloeckner and Siobhán Letic contributed to this story.
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Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Navy F-18 Super Hornet takes off from RAF Lakenheath, England, in 2018. German Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer said that her country is in preliminary talks but hasn't yet committed to buying 45 F/A-18s.

PACIFIC

Mystery deepens over N. Korea leader's location

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The mystery over Kim Jong Un's whereabouts deepened this weekend as satellite images showed a train probably belonging to the North Korean leader at his coastal compound amid speculation about his health.

The images, which were released by the monitoring website 38 North, showed that the 820-foot train has been at the compound near the eastern city of Wonsan since April 21.

The website stressed that the train's presence doesn't confirm the 36-year-old leader's location or indicate anything about his health, "but it does lend weight to reports that Kim is staying at an elite area on the country's eastern coast."

The train was seen at the Leadership railway station, which serves the Wonsan compound, April 15, but was there April 21 and April 23, according to the analysis published Saturday by experts Martyn Williams, Peter Makovsky and Jenny Town.

"Imagery indicates the train arrived sometime before April 21 and was still present on April 23, when it appeared to be repositioned for departure. However, there was no indication when that departure might take place," it added.

The Wonsan compound has been described as a palatial playground for Kim by past visitor former Chicago Bulls star Dennis Rodman.

It includes a large main building, nine large guesthouses, a recreation center, a horse-riding track and a covered dock that is

believed to be for his yacht, according to 38 North.

The report was the latest piece of the puzzle surrounding Kim's prolonged absence from the public eye, heightened by his failure to appear at celebrations marking the April 15 birthday of his late grandfather and the country's founder, Kim Il Sung.

Reuters, citing three people familiar with the situation, also reported this weekend that China has dispatched a team of doctors and officials to advise on Kim, although it provided few details.

The delegation led by a senior member of the Chinese Communist Party's international liaison department left Beijing for North Korea on Thursday, Reuters said, adding that it was unable to determine what the trip signaled in terms of Kim's health.

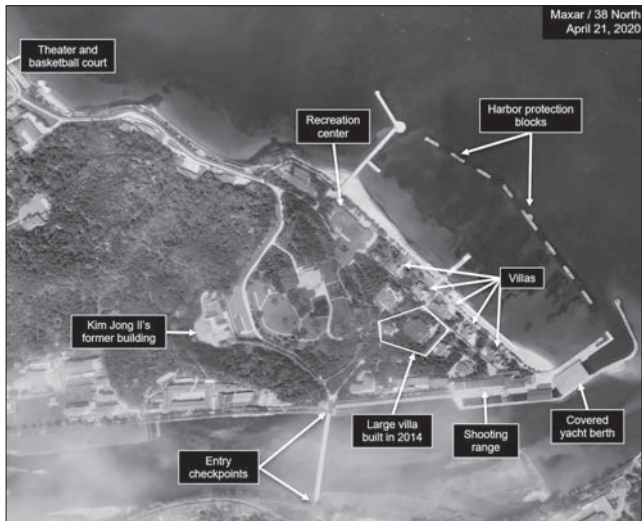
South Korean officials have insisted that no unusual signs have been detected to indicate that Kim is seriously ill.

President Donald Trump has also dismissed unconfirmed reports that Kim had been incapacitated after cardiovascular surgery.

"I think the report was incorrect, let me just put it that way," Trump said Thursday in response to a question about Kim's condition. "I hear the report was an incorrect report. I hope it was an incorrect report."

But concern has intensified as thinly sourced media reports and rumors ranging from claims that Kim is in a vegetative state or already dead circulate on social media.

The third-generation leader also was a no-show for Saturday's anniversary of the founding of the country's military.



MAXAR TECHNOLOGIES/AP

This satellite image provided by Maxar Technologies and annotated by 38 North, a website specializing in North Korea studies, shows an overview of Wonsan complex in Wonsan, North Korea.

The most recent photos of him on state-run media were of him reportedly chairing an April 11 meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's political bureau.

He discussed efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and appointed his sister, Kim Yo Jong, as an alternate member of the political bureau, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

He was also shown inspecting an air defense unit that weekend.

KCNA reported that Kim sent separate messages to the leaders of Syria and Cuba last week, but released no photos.

Experts have urged caution since it's virtually impossible to confirm information about the North Korean leader's health, which has long been a topic of concern because of his weight, a heavy smoking habit and a family history of heart disease.

The world did not learn that

Kim's father, Kim Jong Il, had died of a heart attack in 2011 until it was announced publicly two days later.

Kim Jong Un, who assumed power after his father died, also disappeared once before in 2014, but reappeared with a cane after about six weeks. South Korea's intelligence agency said that he had a cyst removed from his ankle.

The stakes are high, as the Kim family has ruled the nuclear-armed nation since it was founded in 1948. While they have been accused of widespread human rights abuses, many fear that an abrupt change in leadership could spark chaos in the region.

It also raises questions about what would happen to already stalled nuclear talks with the United States, which have largely depended on Kim's relationship with Trump.

"While I am skeptical of re-

ports on Kim Jong Un's death, or incapacitation right now because we have seen this before, it would represent another unprecedented crisis for the president of the United States and the president of South Korea to handle in addition to the coronavirus," said Matthew Schmidt, a security and political science associate professor at the University of New Haven.

"It would force both of the presidents to consider their contingency plans to do things like move into the north to secure nuclear sites and population movement, as well as being concerned about the tens of thousands of artillery pieces aimed at Seoul," he added in an emailed commentary. "We have never done this before and to do this in addition to the virus would be extraordinary."

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N. Korean sympathizer calls news on Kim's health 'false'

BY SHAMIM ADAM
Bloomberg News

The head of the Korean Friendship Association, a group that says it receives official information from North Korea, called news reports that Kim Jong Un is gravely ill untrue.

Alejandro Cao de Benos said that "information about the serious state of health of our Marshal Kim Jong Un is false and malicious," according to a post on Twitter. Cao did not say where he got the information and declined further comment when contacted by Bloomberg.

Kim has been reported to be in critical condition after undergoing cardiovascular surgery. U.S. officials said Monday that they were told Kim's condition was critical after the operation, though they were unsure of his current health. President Donald Trump on Thursday cast doubt about a CNN report saying the North Korean leader was gravely ill.

Kim was conspicuously absent from the April

15 birthday celebration for his grandfather, Kim Il Sung, who founded the nation. He has not been seen since he reportedly visited a military unit on April 12, raising speculation about his condition.

The Korean Friendship Association was founded in November 2000 with the intention of building international ties with North Korea, it said on its website.

The group says that it has membership in 120 countries, and has "full recognition from the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and is the worldwide leading organization of its supporters."

The group organizes tours to North Korea, and Cao regularly travels to the country. He was featured in the 2015 documentary "The Propaganda Game," a case study on propaganda that focuses on North Korea.

The association's website describes Cao as a special delegate of North Korea's Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.



KOREA SUMMIT PRESS POOL/AP

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signs a guestbook next to his sister, Kim Yo Jong, inside the Peace House at the border village of Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone.

WAR/MILITARY

US asks Afghans to halt disputes, focus on virus

By KATHY GANNON
Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — The U.S. peace envoy to Afghanistan on Sunday called on the country's feuding leaders to set their differences aside to combat the coronavirus pandemic and advance a stalled peace agreement signed with the Taliban earlier this year.

"The well-being of the Afghan people and the country itself depend on all parties devoting their full energies to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, the shared enemy of all," Zalmay Khalilzad tweeted early Sunday.

He said Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah, who each declared himself the victor in September's election, should "put the interest of the country ahead of their

own" during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which began last week.

He urged the government and the Taliban to carry out a prisoner exchange that was part of the U.S.-Taliban peace agreement signed in February. The agreement had called for the release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners and 1,000 government personnel held by the insurgents.

To date, Ghani has released 550 detainees based on age, vulnerability to the virus and time served. The Taliban have not said if those are among the prisoners referred to in the agreement. The Taliban have freed 60 prisoners.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement Sunday that the insurgent group was living up to its side of the agreement, and that it was willing to negotiate a nationwide cease-



RAHMAT GUL/AP

A street vendor sells protective masks and gloves to help curb the spread of the coronavirus in Kabul, Afghanistan, on April 19.

fire in intra-Afghan talks. Those negotiations were supposed to have begun within 10 days of the Feb. 29 deal but are still on hold because of the political bickering in Kabul.

The Taliban are continuing to attack security outposts, even as the U.S. and NATO proceed with a full troop withdrawal that is set

to be completed next year.

The Taliban have carried out 2,804 attacks since the agreement was signed, Jawed Faissal, spokesman for the national security adviser's office, said Saturday. However, the Taliban have not attacked U.S. or NATO troops, who say they will continue to aid Afghan forces.

Afghanistan has mean-

while reported 1,463 infections and 47 deaths from the new coronavirus.

Afghanistan's health care system has been heavily degraded by decades of war and would be ill-equipped to contain a major outbreak. Testing has been sporadic, in part because of local stigma surrounding the disease.

Deliver: US military runs exercises to showcase range of capabilities

FROM FRONT PAGE

stop such close encounters — there's been little focus on the recent moves by the U.S. Central Command to come better-armed with joint Navy, Air Force and Army systems for spotting targets and transferring data.

The live-fire gunship exercises began in March as a first-time effort at coordination between Navy patrol coastal ships, the service's P-8A Poseidon reconnaissance aircraft and the Air Force's special operations AC-130 gunships, which are capable

of nighttime attacks. Armed with a 30 mm Gatling gun and precision-guided munitions, the famed gunships have been used to attack ground targets — but not naval targets — from Vietnam to Grenada, Panama, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Then on April 15, Navy vessels were practicing coordinated operations with Army AH-64E Apache tank-busting attack helicopters when the U.S. says Iranian boats came within 50 yards of the USS Lewis B. Puller and within 10 yards of the bow of the Coast Guard cutter Maui.

Under the new approach, the Apaches

can be stationed on the Puller, the Navy's first specially designed floating sea base. The Puller, a destroyer and other, smaller U.S. vessels were practicing spotting targets for the Apaches and transmitting the information. The exercises continued through April 19.

The Apache exercise shows how the Army "can use naval platforms as lily pads to expand their operational range along with providing security in its region of operation," Cmdr. Rebecca Rebarich, the spokeswoman for the Navy's 5th Fleet, said in an email. "The security acts as a deter-

rent for any threats against the U.S. and allied watercraft."

The Apaches can fire Hellfire laser-guided missiles or shoot guns, said Bryan Clark, a former special assistant to the chief of naval operations who's now a naval analyst for the Hudson Institute.

"Since the helicopter can move fast and is shooting down at the boats, they have an easier time hitting than surface ships trying to hit a fast boat that is bouncing on the water." The AC-130 "essentially can strafe the boats," he said.

Paratroopers to return home after rapid deployment to Mideast

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

Some 2,500 members of the 82nd Airborne Division will return home soon after being rapidly deployed to the Middle East amid growing tensions with Iran, just after Christmas.

Paratroopers with the division's 1st Brigade Combat Team were sent to bolster security in the U.S. Central Command area of operations on short notice after a rocket attack killed an American contractor in Iraq and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad was stormed by an Iran-backed Shiite militia the Defense Department had hit with retaliatory strikes.

In a Facebook video last week, brigade commander Col. Andrew O. Saslav said the troops had been approved to return home to Fort Bragg, N.C., "in the coming weeks."

Some 800 had returned in February, before the outbreak of the global coronavirus pandemic forced the military to restrict movement around the world, but officials

said late last month that the remaining thousands of paratroopers would remain deployed indefinitely, as tensions in the region remained high.

In a livestream on Friday, Lt. Col. Doug Massey, the commander of the brigade's rear detachment, said timelines of the brigade's return would not be discussed publicly. None of the paratroopers with the brigade had tested positive for COVID-19, Massey said, but all would be subject to a 14-day quarantine upon their return stateside.

The soldiers had seen a drop in quality of life due to the closure of gyms, some dining facilities and other services at Central Command bases, meant to combat the spread of the virus. The unknown date of return was also causing increased stress for many who were separated from their families during the pandemic, one paratrooper told Stars and Stripes in March.

Though they will be in quarantine, they will be able to be home with their families upon their return, Massey said.

But they won't get the typical welcome home reception at the "green ramp," said the rear detachment's Command Sgt. Maj. Cory Bell in the livestream. Instead, there will be a parade at the base's four-acre Pike Field, where the troops will be in buses and families will be gathered, while maintaining appropriate distancing.

"I highly encourage any family member within the Devil Brigade to go out and line the road there with flags, banners, streamers, whatever it is to welcome home our Devil Brigade paratroopers," Bell said.

As the U.S. military's Immediate Response Force Brigade, the 1st Brigade sent its first battalion to the Middle East within 18 hours of receiving orders in late December. It was the first such rapid deployment since soldiers were called up in response to a devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Much of the brigade stayed in Kuwait during its deployment, where some conducted training. Some others operated in Iraq, including bolstering security at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, officials have

said.

But by late March, the soldiers remaining in Kuwait had complained of a lack of mission set and a family member told Stars and Stripes that they hadn't done anything for weeks other than sit around in tents and go to chow.

But, as tensions between the U.S. and Iran remained high, including a fatal rocket attack in mid-March that killed two American service members and a British soldier, military officials said they were continuing to evaluate whether to redeploy the brigade and when.

In the video message announcing they had been approved to come home, Saslav said he "can't begin to tell you how proud" he and the unit's top enlisted soldier were of their troops.

"The paratroopers and our families have had a historic deployment and now we can't wait to be back in your arms again," he said.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

WHO warns you may catch virus more than once

By PATRICK HENRY
Bloomberg News

Catching COVID-19 once may not actually protect you from getting it again, according to the World Health Organization, a finding that could jeopardize efforts to allow people to return to work after recovering from the virus.

"There is currently no evidence that people who have recovered from COVID-19 and have antibodies are protected from a second infection," the United Nations agency said in a recent statement.

The WHO guidance came after some governments suggested that people who have antibodies to the coronavirus could be issued an "immunity passport" or "risk-free certificate" that would allow them to travel or return to work, based on the assumption that they were safe from reinfection, according to the statement, issued Friday. People given such a certificate could ignore public health guidance, increasing the risk of the disease spreading further.

Chile was the first country to announce plans to issue immunity cards based partly on antibody tests. This has raised concerns because the tests have proven unreliable elsewhere, and some people may get deliberately ill in order to obtain the card. The U.S. and others have nonetheless said that they're looking into the

option.

While there's a consensus that the key to ending the coronavirus pandemic is establishing so-called herd immunity, there are many unknowns. One is whether researchers can develop a safe and effective vaccine. Another is how long people who've recovered have immunity: reinfection after months or years is common with other human coronaviruses. Finally, it's not clear what percentage of people must be immune to protect the "herd." That depends on the contagiousness of the virus.

The WHO said that it's reviewing the scientific evidence on antibody responses to coronavirus, but no study has evaluated whether the presence of antibodies "confers immunity to subsequent infection by this virus in humans" as of yet. And while many countries are currently testing for antibodies, these studies aren't designed to determine whether people recovered from the disease acquire immunity, the agency said.

As the hunt for a vaccine continues around the world, the WHO has formed an international alliance to ensure that treatments are distributed fairly. French President Emmanuel Macron, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are among those involved in the alliance.



ALVARO BARRIENTOS/AP

A woman helps a child clean his hands to protect against COVID-19 in Pamplona, northern Spain.

Outdoor: Nations around the world considering different reopening plans

FROM FRONT PAGE

Two weeks after being released from a London hospital, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson — the only major world leader so far to fall ill with COVID-19 — plans to return to work Monday.

Spain, Italy and France, which have Europe's highest death tolls from the virus, all imposed tough lockdown rules in March. All have reported significant progress in bringing down infection rates and are ready — warily — to start giving citizens more freedom.

"Maximum caution will be our guideline for the rollback," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said as he announced that Spaniards will be allowed to leave their homes for short walks and exercise starting May 2. "We must be very prudent, because

there is no manual, no road map, to follow."

Until now, adults in Spain were allowed out only for essential shopping or to go to work. Children under 14 were in complete seclusion for 44 days, but as of Sunday they were allowed to take walks with one parent for up to an hour. They must stay within 0.6 miles of their homes, take only one toy out and cannot play with other youngsters.

The sound of children shouting and the rattle of bikes on the pavement soon returned.

In Barcelona, Sabate's sons wore child-size face masks as they went out. "Now we will see how long they stay on!" she said.

The prime minister plans to present a detailed plan Tuesday for the "de-escalation" of Spain's

lockdown.

In France, Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said that he will unveil a "national deconfinement strategy" on the same day. That follows weeks of work by experts seeking a balance between restarting the eurozone's second-largest economy and preventing a second wave of infections that could overwhelm France's intensive care units.

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte is expected to announce more details on easing the lockdown in the coming days for the first European country to see a large-scale coronavirus outbreak. Conte said that priorities include restarting construction projects and export industries. He confirmed that school classes won't resume until September.

Dutch students complete Atlantic crossing forced by restrictions

By ALEKSANDAR FURTULA
Associated Press

HARLINGEN, Netherlands — Greeted by relieved parents, pet dogs, flares and a cloud of orange smoke, a group of 25 Dutch high school students with very little sailing experience ended a trans-Atlantic voyage Sunday that was forced on them by coronavirus restrictions.

The children, ages 14 to 17, watched over by 12 experienced crew members and three teachers, were on an educational cruise of the Caribbean when the pandemic forced them to radically change their plans for returning home in March.

That gave one of the young sailors, 17-year-old Floor Hurkmans, one of the biggest lessons of her inexperience: adventure.

"Being flexible, because everything is changing all the time,"

“The children learned a lot about adaptivity, also about media attention, but also their normal school work.”

Christophe Meijer
Director of Masterskip

she said as she set foot on dry land again. "The arrival time changed like 100 times. Being flexible is really important."

Instead of flying back from Cuba as originally planned, the crew and students stocked up on supplies and warm clothes, and set sail for the northern Dutch port of Hartingen, a five-week voyage of nearly 4,350 miles, on board the 200-foot top sail schooner Wyldes Swan.

As they arrived home, the students hung up a self-made banner saying "Bucket List" with ticks in

boxes for Atlantic Ocean crossing, mid-ocean swim and surviving the Bermuda triangle.

The teens hugged and chanted each other's names as they walked off the ship and into the arms of their families, who drove their cars alongside the yacht one by one to adhere to social distancing rules imposed to rein in the spread of the virus that forced the students into their long trip home.

For Hurkmans, the impossibility of any kind of social distancing took some getting used to.

"At home, you just have some moments for yourself, but here, you have to be social all the time to everyone because you're sleeping with them, you're eating with them, you're doing everything with them, so you can't really just relax," she said.

Her mother, Renee Scholte-meijer, said that she expects her daughter to miss life on the open sea once she encounters coronavirus containment measures in the Netherlands.

"I think that after two days she'll want to go back on the boat, because life is very boring back at home," she said. "There's nothing to do, she can't visit friends, so it's very boring."

The twin-masted Wyldes Swan glided into Hartingen harbor late morning Sunday, its sails neatly stowed. Onlookers gathered on a sea wall to watch the arrival set off flares and a smoke grenade

that sent an orange cloud drifting over the glassy water.

Masterskip, the company that organized the cruise, runs five educational voyages for about 150 students in all each year. Crossing the Atlantic is nothing new for the Wyldes Swan, which has made the trip about 20 times.

The company's director, Christophe Meijer, said that the students were monitored for the coronavirus in March to ensure nobody was infected.

He said that he was pleased the students had adapted to life on board and kept up their education on the long voyage.

"The children learned a lot about adaptivity, also about media attention, but also their normal school work," he said. "So they are actually far ahead now of their Dutch school colleagues. They have made us very proud."

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Navy hospital ship readies to leave NY as numbers dip

By MICHAEL R. SISAK
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A Navy hospital ship is offloading patients as it gets ready to set sail from New York City, the state is starting to test health care workers and first responders for coronavirus antibodies and data shows hospitalizations for the disease fell to their lowest level in three weeks.

Details on developments in the coronavirus outbreak in New York:

Shipping off

The Navy hospital ship sent to relieve stress on New York City hospitals at the height the pandemic was discharging or transferring its last 12 patients over the weekend as it nears the end of its mission, according to Northwell Health, which provides operational assistance to the vessel.

The UNS Comfort, docked at a Manhattan pier since March 30, will soon leave for its homeport in Norfolk, Va., where it will restock and be ready for another possible assignment, Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said. He did not provide a date for the ship's departure.

As of Saturday, the 1,000-bed hospital ship had treated just 182 patients. There was just one patient left on the ship late Saturday evening.

Originally deployed to care for patients without coronavirus, the Comfort switched gears and started accepting them as the city's hospitals became overrun with people suffering from the disease.

Hoffman said the Comfort's impending departure "is a sure sign of modest progress in mitigating

the virus in the nation's hardest hit city and is a welcome sign."

A temporary hospital set up at a Manhattan convention center has also seen lower than projected patient volume. As of Saturday, the facility had treated a total of about 1,100 patients, with 125 still receiving care.

First envisioned as a 2,500-bed field hospital for people without the disease, the Javits Center was soon converted to a coronavirus-only hospital, but only ever topped out at about 500 beds.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency said Saturday that there is no official date for the closure of the facility.

"We are encouraged by the data which suggest the curve is flattening in New York and we are working with the city and state to begin the strategic drawdown of resources," the agency said.

Antibody testing

The state is starting to test health care workers for coronavirus antibodies and will do the same next week with transit and law enforcement workers as the state eases away from the worst days of the pandemic, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Saturday.

Doctors, nurses and other employees at four New York City hospitals that have handled high volumes of coronavirus patients will be the first tested under the new program, Cuomo said.

Antibody testing is a way of determining if a person has been infected by the coronavirus even if they hadn't shown symptoms.

Making such testing widely available is seen as a key to reopening society, but the World Health Organization on Saturday warned there is currently no



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Cyclists wearing protective masks ride through Times Square, on Saturday, in New York.

evidence that people who have antibodies are protected from coronavirus.

After weeks of reserving conventional coronavirus testing to people with symptoms to conserve supplies, the state is expanding eligibility to include first responders, health care workers and a long list of essential employees, such as bus drivers, dry cleaners, undertakers and grocery store workers.

"Why? Because these people have been carrying the load and they have been subjected to the public all during this crisis, and because they're public facing," Cuomo said. "These are the people you interact with."

Cuomo said he is signing an executive order to allow pharmacies to serve as collection points for testing samples.

Hospitalizations down

Cuomo's testing announcements came as new data showed hospitalizations for coronavirus

in the state falling to their lowest level in three weeks.

A little more than 13,000 people were being hospitalized for the disease Friday, about the same level the state was on April 1.

The state's COVID-19 hospitalization tally peaked at 18,825 on April 12 and has fallen every day since.

New hospitalizations for the disease are also continuing to drop.

A rolling three-day average showed about 1,200 new hospitalizations for coronavirus on Friday, Cuomo said, the fewest since March 25.

"All of the numbers are basically saying the same, that we are in fact on the downside of the mountain," Cuomo said.

The number of people dying in the state from the disease is also trending lower, though Friday's total of 437 deaths was up slightly over Thursday's tally.

The state peaked with 799 deaths in one day on April 9.

Town helps guardsmen celebrate graduation

By CHRIS FRANKLIN
nj.com

During a typical Coast Guard graduation period in Cape May, N.J., the area buzzes with families, friends and graduates moving about the seaside city's beaches, restaurants and sights. Many of them are from out of state.

At Coast Guard Training Center Cape May, the night before graduation is a time for parents of graduates to meet the center's command staff and share training stories.

For the latest classes, who graduated in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, no parents, friends or loved ones were in town for the ceremonies. The latest was Wednesday, when 86 men and women of class Oscar 198 graduated basic training.

But the town, the adoptive "Coast Guard Community," of Cape May is stepping in to make sure the new members of the Coast Guard receive a rousing send off.

For the last three classes over the past few weeks, vehicles line up along Philadelphia and Pittsburgh avenues to honk their horns and cheer the graduates as they leave the training center for the next part of their Coast Guard journey. A police car leads the bus full of graduates out of the center.

They did it all again Friday for the class that graduated Wednesday.

"It was exciting because you saw all of the people out with the trucks, the cars, and their kids," Cape May City Mayor Clarence Lear said.

"Even in spite of the lockdown, people came out while being responsible and staying away from each other, but still showing their patriotism and love of the Coast Guard families here. Many of the people do not know who those recruits are because they come from all over the country, but they are out there, and they are supporting them, and I think it sends a real message to these recruits who are probably scared to death and been through all of this training," the mayor said.

"Here they are going through a community that they probably barely saw during their recruit training. To go out and see the streets lined with people waving at you. I think it is a great send off, and hopefully, they will be home soon. I think those who got through it will appreciate it," Lear added.

Training center spokesman, Chief Warrant Officer Timothy Tarnago, says the makeshift appreciation for the recruits does not go unnoticed. He said parents often comment on the training center's Facebook page thanking the city and county for supporting their recruit children when they spend time in the area.

Retired general brings team to help Boston beat virus

By HILLARY CHABOT
Boston Herald

Two military all-stars have joined retired four-star Gen. Stanley McChrystal to help Boston Mayor Marty Walsh steer the city and quickly address daily issues popping up during the coronavirus outbreak.

Legendary CIA operative Greg Vogle — who saved Afghan politician and Taliban resistor Hamid Karzai in 2001 — and Lt. Gen. John R. Vines have joined the twice-daily phone calls with Walsh's administration as part of the McChrystal Group's two-month, nearly \$500,000 contract. Walsh hired the group in late March.

"This isn't just the A team, this is the A+ team," said U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton, a Salem Democrat and Iraq War veteran who is a close friend of McChrystal's. "You gotta give credit to Mayor Walsh for humbly asking for their advice and being able to say, 'I don't know everything.' I wish the president was able to do that."

The team talks every morning with Walsh administration officials to identify needs throughout the city and prioritize which ones need fast action, said Walsh spokeswoman Samantha Ormsby.

"Through this work, we seek to solve problems within 24 hours, which allows us to stay as ahead of this virus as much as possible,"

said Ormsby.

Walsh signed a \$458,122 contract with leadership coaches at the McChrystal Group through May, with an option to extend the contract at a rate of \$229,061 a month. The Hub mayor announced last month he would hire the Virginia-based firm to review city operations.

The team could even help Walsh as he carefully plans to reopen the city. Walsh hinted Friday on WGBH radio that re-opening could happen in June.

"I think the transitioning starts probably early summer and I think it's a slow, steady getting back to business over the summer and the fall," Walsh said.

Vogle served as director of the

National Clandestine Service under former President Barack Obama and was the lead paramilitary adviser to Hamid Karzai as he battled the Taliban in 2001. He threw himself on the Afghan politician during a Dec. 5 airstrike, saving his life.

Vines served in the Army for 35 years and was in continuous command for the last six years of his service.

McChrystal created the Virginia-based McChrystal Group to consult and share the leadership methods he learned in the field. He also reviews disaster plans in different agencies across the city and identifies any gaps or overlaps.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

In Trump's shadow, Congress-at-home eyes a reboot

By LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — They long for what's being lost: the ability to publicly question officials at committee hearings, to chat across the aisle, to speak from the House and Senate floor for all of America, and history, to hear.

Congress wants its voice back. With no real plan to reopen Capitol Hill any time soon, the coronavirus shutdown poses an existential crisis that's pushing Congress ever so reluctantly toward the 21st-century option of remote legislating from home.

"It's the ability to be an equal branch of government," said Rep. Katie Porter, a freshman Democrat from California.

Divisions are fierce, but so too is the sense of what is being lost. Every day lawmakers shelter at home, their public role is being visibly diminished. While they are approving record sums of virus aid, they are ceding authority to oversee the effort and tackle next steps.

It's an imbalance of power for all to see: President Donald Trump's daily public briefings without a robust response from Capitol Hill, though there have been discussions within the White House about changing the format of the briefings to curtail his role.

"This is a time where oversight is really important," said Rep. Derek Kilmer, D-Wash., a leader of the moderate New Democrats caucus.

The pandemic "begs for Congress's engagement, virtual or otherwise," he said.

Changing the rules to allow lawmakers to cast votes or hold hearings from home would be unprecedented in House and Senate history. The Constitution requires lawmakers be "present" for most action.

The simmering debate cuts across political fault lines. Some lawmakers want to stick with tradition, while others are tech-savvy and ready for change. A vocal band of conservatives insists that Congress must reopen now, despite public health warnings, echoing Trump's push to end the shutdown. Others have no interest in returning to the crowded Capitol complex until it's safe.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., shelved a proposal for proxy voting this past week after Republicans objected. Once resistant to what she called "Congress by Zoom" meeting, she tapped a bipartisan task force to present fresh ideas.

In the Senate, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., rejected

a GOP remote vote proposal. He expects Congress to return May 4, as planned.

The reluctance to change is leaving the legislative branch behind after even the tradition-bound Supreme Court announced that it would hear oral arguments by teleconference as stay-home rules reorder civic life.

"It's a huge can of worms," said Sarah Binder, a professor at George Washington University.

She said that the pandemic provokes a set of issues far beyond the logistics of working remotely. Among them: Is it safe to return to Capitol Hill? Can you be "present" if you appear on a computer screen?

But she also said, "They need a solution if they're not going to be able to come back."

Lawmakers have said that they can only do so much on conference calls and virtual town hall meetings as they assess \$3 trillion in coronavirus aid and consider annual spending, defense and other bills.

While the 100 senators can usually command attention on their own, the 435 rank-and-file House members have a harder time being heard.

One prime opportunity is time allotted to lawmakers at committee hearings.

It may be just five minutes on C-SPAN, but for members of Congress, the committee means everything. It's their chance to make a difference.

Porter knows firsthand what's being lost with Congress away.

As the pandemic emerged, she wrote a letter asking the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to provide free virus testing as the country scrambled to slow the spread of COVID-19.

"They blew us off," she said.

But when CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield appeared before the House Oversight and Reform Committee, Porter had her moment.

In a video that went viral, she grilled Redfield on whether he would commit to invoking authority under federal law to declare pandemic testing free.

He said yes.

"It wasn't until we got Dr. Redfield in front on me, and I had my five minutes with the cameras on him, in front of the American people, that I was able to get an answer," she said.

But under House rules, committees usually need members to be physically present to meet. While several committees have been conducting briefing calls with key administration officials, it's mostly out of public view.



GAIL BURTON/AP

Kweisi Mfume, Democratic nominee for Maryland's 7th Congressional District, raises his fist at a February victory party in Baltimore.

Virus creates unprecedented Maryland congressional election

By BRIAN WITTE
Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Ballots cast in person in Maryland's special congressional election between Democrat Kweisi Mfume and Republican Kimberly Klacik will be quarantined for about 24 hours after the polls close before being counted — to give any potential germs a chance to die to help protect election workers.

It's one of the safety measures that's being taken in an unprecedented Maryland election Tuesday that will only have three places for in-person voting out of concern for the coronavirus, as election officials are strongly urging eligible voters to mail in their ballots in a single race to decide who will serve the rest of the term of the late U.S. Rep. Elijah Cummings, who died in October.

In hopes of avoiding the lines seen in this month's Wisconsin primary, roughly 484,000 ballots were mailed to registered voters in the district. More than 77,000 already have been turned in. More than half of the vote could be released on the state elections board website shortly after the 8 p.m. poll close on Tuesday.

Precautions due to the virus in this special election have thrust the candidates into unknown campaign territory in the time of a pandemic.

Fundraising has been tough. Candidates haven't been able to reach voters with traditional techniques like door-to-door campaigning or large events. Both candidates have said that they have been trying to reach voters more through social media.

The majority-black district that

includes a large portion of Baltimore as well as parts of its suburbs in Baltimore and Howard counties is heavily Democratic, with more than four Democrats for each Republican.

Klacik, the Republican who has appeared on Fox News and caught President Donald Trump's attention with her social media posts that prompted the president to describe the district as a "disgusting rat and rodent-infested mess," said that the pandemic has made it difficult to campaign. But the 38-year-old believes she has an edge on the 71-year-old Mfume in the realm of social media.

"I don't think he was really on social media platforms previously, so I felt like we had a little bit of an advantage that way, but, at the same time, he has such a big name," Klacik said. "So we're basically trying to shout out loud on social media how we can make a positive impact against basically an incumbent, because he had the seat prior to Congressman Cummings."

Mfume, a former NAACP head who held the U.S. House seat for five terms from 1987 to 1996, said that he also has been working hard on social media. The man who won his first race for Baltimore City Council in 1978 by three votes said that he's not talking anything for granted in the uncertain times.

"It probably concerns me more, because I recognize how elections can be close — even when you don't think that they are going to be," Mfume said.

Some of the leading issues both candidates have been campaigning on include health care, reducing crime and promoting job

creation.

Mfume supports stronger gun-control measures and focusing on root causes of crime, like the inability of young adults to find jobs. He has been advocating for greater support for apprenticeships to develop skills for young people to find work.

Klacik has been advocating to help struggling parts of Baltimore through a federal program known as opportunity zones. The program, which is supported by Trump, focuses on increasing private investment in distressed communities with tax incentives for people who invest in real estate projects and operate businesses in designated low-income communities.

Only three in-person voting centers will be open Tuesday for voters who can't vote by mail, such as the disabled or the homeless, though other eligible voters can cast ballots in person if they choose.

Voting centers are being prepared to comply with social distancing guidelines.

"Things will be very spread apart," said Nikki Charlson, the state election board's deputy administrator. "The poll workers will be sanitizing the surfaces."

The winner will run as an incumbent in the state's crowded June 2 primary for a full term. Ballots for the primary will be mailed to Maryland voters in early to mid-May, very soon after Tuesday's election.

"That just seems a little strange and foreign. It's because it really is," Mfume said. "We've never had anything like this in the state before."

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Crowds flock to Calif. beaches amid restrictions

By KEVIN BAXTER
AND ALEX WIGGLESWORTH
Los Angeles Times

Ventura and Orange county beaches in Southern California that were open Saturday drew big crowds hoping to cool off and enjoy the views.

Officials reported few incidents and said people were doing their best to social distance.

In Ventura, the opening of city and state beaches brought out hundreds, an unseasonably large crowd, said Ventura Police Cmdr. Tom Higgins.

Most people, drawn by comfortable temperatures that hovered in the mid 70s under pale-blue skies, stuck to the bike and running paths just above the sand. But hundreds also made their way down to the water's edge.

"After being cooped up, we understand people want to enjoy the outside," Higgins said.

But with restrictions. The beaches in Ventura County are only partially opened and poster-size signs offer constant reminders of what is and isn't permitted.

Parking lots, playgrounds, rest-

rooms and restaurants all remain closed, as does the Ventura pier, which separates city and state beaches that are operating under slightly different rules.

"We're coordinating so they're consistent," Higgins said.

The rules forbid beachgoers from sitting or lying on the sand, but that wasn't being strictly enforced Saturday.

At midday, Ventura police Sgt. Mike Anselmo walked along the sand politely asking people with children to take their umbrellas down but allowing them to sunbathe.

"Technically you're not supposed to sit down. But they're with kids. I'm not going to ask some 50-year-old parents to run around with kids all day," Anselmo said. The lack of shade, he added, would encourage them to move on.

The goal, Higgins said, was to apply common sense and seek cooperation rather than issue citations.

"We're in a mode of educating right now," he said.

Even dogs were given a long leash, allowed to wander freely as



ALLEN J. SCHABEN, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

Thousands of beachgoers enjoy a sunny day at the beach Saturday in Huntington Beach, Calif., amid state-mandated stay-at-home and social distancing guidelines in a bid to stave off the coronavirus.

a solitary lifeguard in a red bathing suit stood outside her tower scanning the turquoise water with binoculars.

Although few people — including the lifeguard and police — wore masks, most observed social-distancing rules, reminded to stay six feet apart by a flashing road sign outside Santa Buenaventura State Beach.

At the north end of the beach, several dozen surfers fought to get atop the 3- to 4-foot swells.

By midafternoon, with the beach largely emptied, Robin Hoag and Paige Leichtman finally made their way over from their

nearby home.

They have been hiking county trails and riding their bikes to work since their favorite beach was closed last month, but they waited for the visitors from L.A. County, where beaches are still closed, to leave before coming back Saturday to play paddle ball.

"It's pretty laid-back now," Hoag said. "People will go wherever it's open."

Heather Rangel, media information officer for the Newport Beach Police Department, said there had been no arrests or citations related to the stay-at-

home orders, despite an uptick in beachgoers.

"The beaches are crowded and look like a summer day in Newport Beach," she said in an email.

Huntington Beach also elected to open its coastline, though the pier, beach parking lot and some metered parking remain closed.

Angie Bennett, spokeswoman for the Huntington Beach Police Department, said that beaches appeared somewhat busy, but there were no significant incidents, and no one was cited for violating social-distancing guidelines.

California's Catalina Island struggles without tourism

By JOHN ROGERS
AND CHRIS CARLSON
Associated Press

AVALON, Calif. — When the gates to California's "Island of romance" were all but locked to lovers and pretty much everybody else last month it may have saved the 4,000 residents from a coronavirus outbreak but it destroyed an economy based almost solely on tourism.

The stay-at-home order instituted across California isolated tiny Santa Catalina Island from the virus that was spreading rapidly on the mainland. The ocean-front city of Avalon, whose picturesque beauty has sold millions of postcards over the years, has been turned into a ghost town.

The hotels are empty, the bars along the strand have shut down, almost all the restaurants are closed and the snorkelers, boaters, surfers, hikers and others who would be filling the island's beaches and crystal-blue waters are nowhere to be found.

"We're dying here," said 25-year resident Carole Cotter, pulling off her protective mask to talk after a grocery trip. "We can't survive just on property taxes, that's insufficient. We need our tourist dollars back."

Cotter, whose husband has been furloughed from operating the tram that carries people to Catalina's picturesque "Airport in the Sky," said that although the peace and quiet has sometimes been pleasant most locals long for the days



CHRIS CARLSON/AP

A resident walks down the empty main shopping street on Catalina Island in Avalon, Calif., on April 18.

when people jammed the streets, crowded restaurants and made it difficult to find a place to pitch a towel on the beach.

"It's very, very quiet here and we're not used to that," she said. "We're used to being a noisy, touristy town."

That was the vision of William Wrigley Jr., the chewing gum magnate who pur-

chased Santa Catalina in 1919 and built many of its landmarks to draw visitors. He also owned the Chicago Cubs and used the island as the team's spring training location.

Further popularized by the 1950s pop song "26 Miles," a reference to Catalina's location from the Southern California

shoreline south of Los Angeles, the island draws more than a million tourists a year, according to the local Chamber of Commerce.

Cruise ships deposit as many as 2,000 people a week for brief stopovers while the Catalina Express ferries thousands more each day from mainland ports, including many who stay at hotels.

Now the Express is just down to a couple runs a day, mainly carrying islanders to the mainland for doctor appointments or other essential trips while bringing a few utility workers over to keep things running.

In the weeks that the city's normally bustling Avalon port has been closed, Mayor Ann Marshall estimates the harbor alone has lost nearly \$2 million in business.

"We are seriously looking for some of this bailout money to help us," she said.

Meanwhile, many people say they are getting antsy to return to work at the bait and tackle stores, surf shops, kayak-rental places and other businesses that ferry people around the island on glass-bottom boats or ferries, allowing them to watch the buffalo roam the island's back country or the deer and the dolphins play. And not just because they want to start making money again.

"At this point, we really do miss all of our visitors," said Megan Wright, owner of the Cafe Metropole near the beach.

"We're used to seeing the same people every year," she added, noting that during her 10 years on the island many of them have become friends as well.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Fear, unease at drive-thru testing sites

Associated Press

PARAMUS, N.J. — They climb into their cars in the middle of the night, racing to get in a line from which they may be turned away.

Feeling sick and stressed, people in the states hardest hit by the coronavirus have continued to stream into drive-thru testing sites, hoping to get guidance about whether to seek treatment, or reassurance that they aren't infected.

So, they wait in darkness outside tented testing sites like the one at Bergen Community College, in Paramus, N.J., with achy bodies and uneasy minds, hoping shortly after sunrise they can finally be tested.

"This is obvious, but I just hope I didn't infect anybody," said Alexander Carpio, 17, as he waited for his turn.

Mobile testing sites like the one in northern New Jersey, across the border from the epicenter of the U.S. outbreak in New York, were hastily arranged in a scramble to catch up on testing that remains difficult to get, especially for those who weren't showing severe symptoms or elderly. There are 24 in New Jersey handling about 8,000 tests per day.

As of Wednesday, about 96,000 people had tested positive in the state. Next door, in New York, more than a quarter million

people have learned through testing that they are infected. The true number of ill people in both states is undoubtedly higher, as in many places tests remain scarce enough that people are being urged to only seek them if they are very ill.

In New Rochelle, the New York City suburb that was an early hot spot for the virus, a drive-thru testing site was established at Glen Island Park. That still left many people frustrated: Police turned away cars when they showed up without required appointments.

Even those who didn't feel sick were jolted when they arrived at the popular location for picnics and special events on the Long Island Sound, and were greeted by National Guard troops and medical personnel outfitted head-to-toe in masks and other protective equipment.

"It was nerve-racking because it was like a movie scene. I used to go to Glen Island all the time and now it's a pandemic zone," said Joe Goubeaud, who was advised to test along with his family after his wife, Kristina, a nurse in the New Rochelle school system, had symptoms.

An appointment wasn't required in Paramus, but those seeking to be tested had to be showing symptoms. And with the ability to conduct only 500 tests



PHOTOS BY SETH WENNA/AP

A police officer waves traffic past the entrance to a drive-thru coronavirus testing center after it reached capacity in Paramus, N.J., in March.

per day, the site was reaching its capacity so quickly that it was closing not long after its 8 a.m. opening.

Teresa Reyes arrived after 4 a.m. and, with her husband Gene, she waited in a line of cars that can snake dozens deep inside lanes divided by orange cones. They both work in New York hospitals, watching colleagues fall ill and dreading they would as well. She's back at work now, but baffled at the struggle to get a test.

"It's kind of sad and also frustrating because this is America and we came from the Philippines and it's a third-world country. And I feel also for my co-workers, because we're dealing with something that we don't know, and we're not even protected," she said while breaking into tears.

"It's heartbreaking. This is the USA. This is a first-world country. It's supposed to be rich."

Officials in many states hit hard by the virus have said that the lack of widespread testing is the biggest challenge to lifting

restrictions on social interaction that have kept people away from their jobs, and each other, for weeks.

A majority of the people who successfully get a test wind up testing negative, state statistics show.

Roseli Contreras, a new mother with a 2-month-old son, was one of them. The baby's pediatrician told her to stop breastfeeding after she began feeling ill, and even testing negative didn't ease her concerns because she feared a mix-up in the results.

Her father, Roselio Contreras, who tested with her, was positive — even though he feels no symptoms. She wonders whether the similarity of their names resulted in a mistake, all while hoping she won't have to stop seeing her son altogether.

"I just don't want to end up in a hospital," she said. "I don't want us to separate. Yeah, it's just a scary thought really."

It's one that consumes all of them. Besides wondering if they

may be infected with an illness that has killed more than 18,000 in the two states, there is a desire to protect family members who may be even more susceptible.

Alexander is a senior in high school, aware he may miss out on prom night, a graduation ceremony and so much more that was supposed to make this springtime so fun. He's been accepted to college but doesn't know where that stands, because he isn't sure if or when he can take the placement exams that are supposed to determine his classes.

But he has much bigger concerns.

He shares a room in his family's home with his 72-year-old grandmother, who is diabetic. With pain in his lungs that was so severe that he switched from sleeping on his stomach to his back, he was certain he would be like his mother, who had already tested positive.

He did, though he's now feeling better.



Alexander Carpio waits in line to be tested for the new coronavirus in Paramus, N.J., earlier this month.

Plunge in donations leaving some churches in jeopardy

The Washington Post

Pastor J. Artie Stuckey has cut or eliminated every staff salary at his small Mississippi church. He's nervously watching the payments for the building where Restoration Baptist meets. He reminds his congregation to keep tithing, but he knows many of them — the barber, the electrician, the musician — have also seen their finances rocked by the pandemic shutdown.

Stuckey, a 42-year-old who sold cars until ministry called him 15 years ago, is sympathetic to being cash-strapped. Restoration wasn't in great financial shape even before the virus wiped out more than 50% of its weekly offerings.

But now the 65-member evangelical church outside Jackson is in survival mode. Which, to Stuckey, feels like a test of faith.

"I made a commitment to God, to my people. We've been teaching and preaching faith. Anyone can be a leader, but if you're a faith leader, what do we do?" he asked. "Do we fold, or do we become a living example of what we've preached for so many years?"

The novel coronavirus is pressing painfully on the soft underbelly of U.S. houses of worship: their finances. About a third of all congregations have no savings, according to the 2018-2019 National Congregations Study. Just 20% streamed their services, and 48% were able to accept donations electronically, the study found, making it more challenging to serve the faithful and gather their donations during the virus shutdown.

The blow has been hardest on the na-

tion's many small congregations (about half of U.S. congregations are the size of Stuckey's or smaller). Some experts think the coronavirus could reshape the country's religious landscape and wipe out many small houses of worship. These are places where members typically go to seek guidance and comfort, but members are now finding closed buildings and desperate pleas for funds.

"It's like a father who can't do for their child. Like if God sent Jesus to earth but could do nothing for him. There's nothing I can do, and that's one of the worst things a father can say to a child," said the Rev. Rickey Scott, pastor of the 175-member East St. Peter Missionary Baptist Church outside Oxford, Miss.

With funding at about 65% of normal,

Scott has cut all of his staff, including church musicians and secretaries, and is agonizing about congregants who are isolated. He streams Sunday services and Wednesday Bible studies live on Facebook but knows only about half of the congregation is connected. The region has poor connectivity, many people lack money to pay for devices to connect to the Internet, and some are older and uncomfortable with the technology.

"I see my psychological effect like that of the Apostle Paul when he was in prison, to the Philippians," he said, citing writings attributed to an imprisoned Paul sending a message to a community of Christians in Greece. "I feel I'm in spiritual solitary confinement. For the sake of Jesus Christ, I have to endure this suffering."

NATION

Supreme Court will hear cases over the phone

By MARK SHERMAN
AND JESSICA GRESKO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — This is how the Supreme Court embraces technology. Slowly.

It took a worldwide pandemic for the court to agree to hear arguments over the telephone, with audio available live for the first time. C-SPAN plans to carry the arguments.

Just two years ago, case filings were made available online, decades after other courts. Other forays into technology, including posting opinions online, have not always gone smoothly.

Chief Justice John Roberts acknowledged in 2014 that courts will always be cautious when it comes to embracing the “next big thing” in technology.

And even the decision to hold arguments via telephone is “sort of retro,” given much of the country and other courts are doing meetings and arguments using video conferencing, said Clare Cushman, the director of publications at the Supreme Court Historical Society.

But the decision remains a

“giant leap forward,” Cushman said, for a court that has shunned technology in favor of tradition. The court used an obsolete document delivery system, pneumatic tubes, until 1971. It was slow to add computers and late in transitioning from printing opinions in the court’s basement on Linotype machines, which used metal type, to electronic printing in the early 1980s.

Before the coronavirus outbreak, the justices circulated messages and opinion drafts on paper rather than by email.

Still, most of the nine justices — six of them over the age of 65 — seem perfectly comfortable with modern technology in their own lives. Justice Elena Kagan has said she is on Twitter, and Justice Samuel Alito has described reading briefs on an iPad. Justice Sonia Sotomayor wears an electronic sensor that monitors her diabetes. And Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh have teenage and pre-teen children who might be expected to text their fathers.

Even the court’s two oldest justices are somewhat tech-savvy. This month, 81-year-old Justice



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

The Supreme Court has agreed to here cases over the phone with audio available live for the first time. The court has had issues with integrating technology into its daily life.

Stephen Breyer used Zoom to talk to students at a New York school. His background: a picture of the court.

And 87-year-old Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has said she reads her email on an iPhone and uses an iPad, though not perhaps to its maximum advantage — she told an audience in 2016 that she uses the iPad as a sound machine to help her sleep.

The court has come a long way since 1993, when Justice Anthony Kennedy, now retired, marveled over a new device in his home and invited two colleagues who lived nearby to come use it.

“In my lower level office at home I have a FAX machine. The thing works 24 hours a day. You can use it to send and receive any time you like,” Kennedy wrote in a note now in the Library of Congress archives.

Still, the decision to hold 10 arguments in cases via telephone during six days in May and let the public listen in was unimaginable even two months ago.

The dramatic change is a product of efforts to slow the spread of the virus, recognize the reality that most of the justices are at risk because of their age and decide significant cases by the court’s

traditional summer break.

This year, those cases include President Donald Trump’s effort to shield his tax and other financial records and whether presidential electors must cast their Electoral College ballots for their states’ winners.

The new arrangement might be good for one month only, assuring the justices can return to courtroom arguments when their new term begins in October. But several advocates of greater transparency hope the justices will allow simultaneous broadcasting of arguments even after the pandemic is over.

Court reinstates California ammunition purchase law

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — An appeals court has reinstated a California law requiring background checks for people buying ammunition, reversing a federal judge’s decision to stop the checks that he said violate the constitutional right to bear arms.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday granted the state attorney general’s request to stay the judge’s order.

“This means that the same restrictions that have been previously in effect regarding ammunition in California are back for the time being,” the National Rifle Association, which hailed the judge’s injunction, said in a news release.

The law, which took effect in July, requires Californians to pass an in-store background check before buying ammu-

“This means that the same restrictions that have been previously in effect regarding ammunition in California are back for the time being.”

National Rifle Association release

nition, which involves running buyers’ names through a California Department of Justice database that tracks legal purchases of guns.

Gun rights activists complained the law’s red tape and database errors unfairly limited legal purchases of ammunition.

U.S. District Judge Roger T. Benitez in San Diego ruled in their favor, saying the law “defies common sense while un-

duly and severely burdening the Second Amendment rights of every responsible, gun-owning citizen desiring to lawfully buy ammunition.”

While it is intended to keep ammunition from criminals, it blocked sales to legitimate, law-abiding buyers about 16% of the time, Benitez wrote. Moreover, he ruled that the state’s ban on importing ammunition from outside California violates fed-

eral interstate commerce laws.

Attorney General Xavier Becerra said in a court filing earlier this month that the background checks stopped more than 750 people from buying bullets illegally from July 2019 through January 2020, not including those who didn’t even try because they knew they weren’t eligible.

The law requires buyers who already are in the state’s firearm background check database to pay a \$1 fee each time they buy ammunition, while others can buy longer-term licenses if they do not have certain criminal convictions or mental health commitments.

It took an average of fewer than five minutes to complete the background checks, according to state court filings.

Man sentenced to 18 months in prison for threatening to kill Trump

Associated Press

DALLAS — A 36-year-old Texas man has been sentenced to 18 months in federal prison for threatening to assassinate President Donald Trump, prosecutors

said.

Michael Gedlu was sentenced Friday, according to a statement from U.S. Attorney Erin Nealy Cox’s office in Dallas. He pleaded guilty in December to making threats against Trump.

According to plea documents, Gedlu admitted he threatened Trump’s life on social media, stating on YouTube: “I am waiting for Trump to visit Dallas before I attempt to assassinate him.”

During court proceedings,

prosecutors said that on May 31, 2018, Gedlu was observed across the street from Dallas’ Adolphus Hotel just 30 minutes before Trump arrived there for a fundraiser. Dallas police officers noticed Gedlu holding a

“Kill Trump” sign and detained him as he screamed, “kill the president.”

Prosecutors said the U.S. Secret Service conducted the investigation with the assistance of the Dallas police.

WORLD



ROSKOSMOS SPACE AGENCY PRESS SERVICE/AP

The Russian Progress MS-14 cargo spacecraft blasts off from the launch pad at Russia's space facility carrying 2.5 tons of supplies for the International Space Station Saturday in Baikonur, Kazakhstan.

Russia sends 2.5 tons of supplies to space station

Tribune News Service

MOSCOW — A Russian cargo ship docked with the International Space Station, delivering more than 2.5 tons of food, fuel, equipment for experiments and other supplies on Saturday.

The uncrewed Russian Progress 75 freighter had successfully launched on a Soyuz rocket from the Baikonur Cosmodrome spaceport in Kazakhstan on Friday evening.

It arrived at the space station, some 250 miles above Earth, after a journey that lasted 3 hours and 20 minutes, the Russian space

agency Roskosmos said.

Three people aboard the ISS — NASA astronaut Chris Cassidy and Russian cosmonauts Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner — were on hand to help with its arrival.

Because of the highly contagious new coronavirus, the Progress underwent a special disinfection before the launch, as well as the cargo it carried.

NASA said the Progress 75 is expected to stay docked to the ISS for seven months, departing in December for its "deorbit into Earth's atmosphere."

Poland suspects Russia in disinformation attack

By VANESSA GERA
Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — A Polish government official says Poland has been hit by a "complex disinformation operation" that appears aimed at weakening the Polish-U.S. alliance and is consistent with previous Russian cyberattacks.

Stanislaw Zaryn, spokesman for the head of the country's security services, said Saturday that Poland continues to investigate and has no final evidence that the attack was directed by Russia. But he said it bears all the hallmarks of a Kremlin-led campaign.

"Poland has been a target of

Russian propaganda for many years," Zaryn told The Associated Press in an emailed statement. "Lately these kinds of efforts are intensifying more and more."

Zaryn on Twitter described a cyberattack on the website of the War Studies Institute in Warsaw, a defense academy that trains Polish military leaders. He said cyberattackers posted a fake letter in the name of the schools' rector calling on Polish soldiers to fight the "American occupation."

The letter's message was amplified by being reported on news portals, including one known for pushing disinformation, he said.

"The content of the letter

matched the main narratives Russian propaganda constantly pushes against Poland and the United States," Zaryn wrote.

Zaryn said that Polish authorities believe the purpose of the attacks is to sow information chaos, undermine the morale of Polish soldiers and stir up anti-American sentiment, among other reasons.

He alleged that the Kremlin is trying to use the coronavirus crisis to free itself from its international isolation and persuade the West to lift sanctions imposed over Russian activity in Ukraine. He said "the Kremlin tries to slander Poland" because it is "one of the hardliners" on sanctions.

German minister backs right to work from home

Associated Press

BERLIN — Germany's labor minister wants to enshrine into law the right to work from home if it is feasible to do so, even after the coronavirus pandemic subsides.

Labor Minister Hubertus Heil told Sunday's edition of the Bild am Sonntag newspaper that he

aims to put forward such legislation this fall. He said initial estimates suggest the proportion of the work force working from home has risen from 12% to 25% during the virus crisis, to around 8 million people.

"Everyone who wants to and whose job allows it should be able to work in a home office, even when the corona pandemic is

over," Heil was quoted as saying. "We are learning in the pandemic how much work can be done from home these days."

Heil stressed that "we want to enable more home working, but not force it." He said people could choose to switch entirely to working from home, or do so for only one or two days per week.

Lightning kills at least 10 villagers in India

PATNA, India — Lightning killed at least 10 villagers during thunderstorms and heavy rain in eastern India on Sunday, a gov-

ernment official said.

Pratay Amrit, a Bihar state disaster management official, said nine others suffered injuries after lightning struck them in Khalapura, a village in Bihar state's Saran district. They were plucking vegetables in farms, about 35 miles

north of Patna, the state capital.

Amrit said nine villagers died on the spot and one later died in a hospital. In July last year, lightning killed 39 people in Bihar state during the monsoon season.

From The Associated Press

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Transportation

944

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WIRED WORLD

The virtual reality

Lots of companies now want your video chats — even Facebook

By BARBARA ORTUTAY
Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Amid the coronavirus pandemic, this has become an era of Zoom birthdays, virtual happy hours, FaceTime story times and Google yoga classes. Our friends, coworkers, teachers — and doctors, if we're lucky — now largely exist as faces in rectangles on our phones and computer screens.

With people's social lives moved indefinitely online, a bevy of big and small tech companies want to unseat fast-rising Zoom from its perch atop the heap, given security concerns and other issues with the video-calling service. There were already several smaller contenders for the throne, and now there's a big one as well: Facebook.

Zoom, which boasts 300 million users, had the luck to be in the right place at the right time just as millions of employees around the world suddenly found themselves ordered to work from home. But the service has always been focused on business users, and it shows. Inviting people to video chats is cumbersome — for instance, Zoom generates an invitation more than 20 lines long that offers a bewildering number of ways to connect (H.323/SIP protocol, anyone?). Its text-chat system is rudimentary and it gives people exactly two emojis for reacting to others in video — a wave and a thumbs-up.

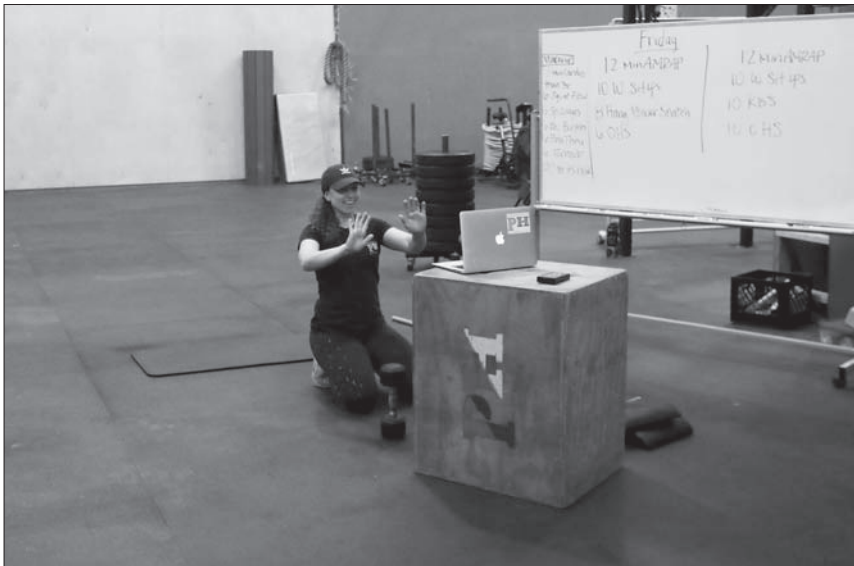
Smaller services like Houseparty, which launched in 2016, think this gives them an opening. The app, owned by Fortnite maker Epic Games, lets up to eight people videochat together in virtual rooms, send video messages called "Facemail" and play games. Houseparty said in late April that it had 50 million new sign-ups in the past month — a figure that's around 70 times above normal in some areas.

Facebook's WhatsApp, Apple's FaceTime and similar Google apps offer group video chat as well, although FaceTime is limited to iPhones and other Apple devices. So do a variety of more business-focused companies: Cisco with WebEx, Microsoft with Skype and Teams, and the smaller company 8x8 with its open-source service Jitsi.

Now Facebook aims to make a bigger splash in the field, although it will have to contend with privacy concerns and the question of whether it will ultimately show ads alongside video chat.

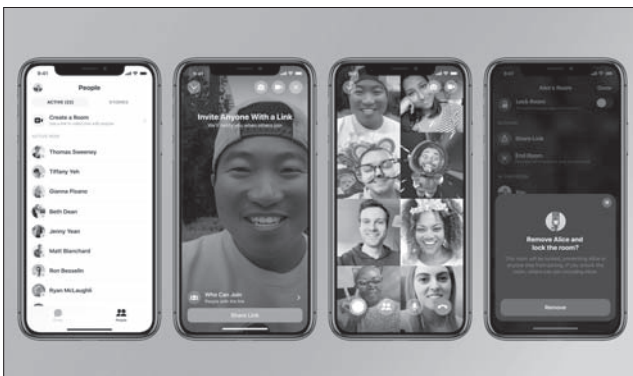
Called Messenger Rooms, the Facebook service announced Friday uses virtual rooms similar to those that exist for text chat within Messenger. These let you open the door to your friends can swing by unannounced, or schedule a dinner party for 8 p.m. on a Friday. People without Facebook accounts can be included, and the company says they won't have to create accounts.

The tool will live on Facebook's main app and on Messenger; it will eventually spread to Whats-



JEFF CHIU/AP

Alexis Garrod, CrossFit Potrero Hill partner and head coach, gives virtual high-fives Friday to participants after instructing a class over Zoom in an empty gym, which closed for shelter-in-place orders over COVID-19 concerns, in San Francisco.



FACEBOOK/AP

Facebook's new video chat service, called Messenger Rooms, is seen on a mobile phone.

App, Instagram Direct and the company's Portal video calling device as well.

"It's really nice because during this period when we are all home, a lot of people you probably won't call directly," said Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, speaking to The Associated Press via a Messenger video call from his home in Palo Alto, Calif. "There is not really another piece of software out today that would create that

kind of spontaneous serendipity."

Zuckerberg said Facebook had been working on the service before the pandemic forced people around the world to confine themselves in their homes. And he thinks the trend toward video communication will stay after it's over, even if it is at an "unnatural peak" right now. The company is also expanding the number of people who can join WhatsApp video calls from four to eight and

adding a "virtual" option to its dating service.

"Certainly having everyone at home has shifted how we think about this," Zuckerberg said.

While Facebook has enjoyed a bit of a resurgence in usage amid the pandemic, it is not yet clear if that will stick if and when people return to normal. "Even though Zoom has had a hilarious assortment of security issues, Facebook strikes us as even less trustwor-

thy," said Carole Elaine Furr, an accountant in Richmond, Vt., who is a frequent Zoom user.

Zoom's meteoric rise has come with some growing pains. Hackers have invaded meeting rooms to make threats, interject racist, anti-gay or anti-Semitic messages, or show pornographic images, although the company has taken steps to prevent that. It also faced privacy concerns, such as an "attention tracking" feature that Zoom eventually removed earlier this month. Zoom was also sued in California for sharing user data with Facebook — another practice it now says it has stopped.

The COVID-19 pandemic has "rewritten the rules for interpersonal communication," said Ian Greenblatt, managing director and head of the J.D. Power technology, media and telecom intelligence business. For some companies, he said, this could mean a rare chance to build awareness and consumer loyalty. For others, the sudden influx of users — and new ways of using their tools — means new challenges.

Facebook says it will not listen into video calls or record what people show or tell. For this reason, should a virtual date veer X-rated, the company is unlikely to step in unless someone complains. Facebook says it has no plans right now to show ads on video calls or use information from them to target users with ads. Of course, that could change.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

City upgraded with 20 focused tornado sirens

TN NASHVILLE — Nashville is adding 20 tornado sirens in a system upgrade that will let the warnings go off in specific areas, instead of throughout all of the city.

The Metro Office of Emergency Management said in a news release that it will begin work on the next phase of a \$1.9 million upgrade to Nashville's tornado warning system alongside Metro Information Technology Services.

Officials expect to finish the project this year. Nashville will then have 113 sirens that will provide more focused alerts based on National Weather Service information.

When completed, sirens will only sound inside a warned area, instead of throughout Nashville's city-county boundaries.

Woman traps fox in pot used to scald chickens

ME GRAY — A fox that was attacking a Maine woman quickly found that its goose was cooked when she wrestled it into a pot meant for scalding chickens.

Eliza Ruth Watson, 37, of Gray tried to scare the fox away while she was gardening. Instead, the animal ran toward her, the Sun Journal reported.

The fox bit Watson's hand, and she grabbed it by the neck to keep it from biting her again. After a struggle, she found a pot used to scald birds for plucking, shoved the fox in and closed the lid. She then called 911.

An ambulance took Watson to a hospital, where her cuts were cleaned and she received five rabies vaccine injections.

Game wardens later trapped the fox, which was taken to Augusta to be tested for rabies.

Bigfoot statue urging social distancing stolen

MA BRIMFIELD — Police in one Massachusetts town are on the hunt for Bigfoot.

A statue of the legendary ape creature was stolen from outside a home in Brimfield, a small town 20 miles east of Springfield.

The Worcester Telegram reported that the Springfield Bigfoot-sized statue had lately been outfitted with signs reminding people to observe social distancing guidelines amid the coronavirus outbreak. It even sported a face covering.

Bigfoot's owner has offered a \$200 reward for the statue, which he said has a value of \$2,400.

Mayor reports woman hiding in his cellar

KY BOWLING GREEN — A Kentucky mayor said he found a woman hiding in his cellar.

Bowling Green Mayor Bruce Wilkinson said he found the woman after he heard noises and smelled cigarette smoke outside a home he was renovating, WKY-



RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

'Be Here Now,' on the driveway

A pair of bicyclists wave to musicians George Sheldon, left, and Sandra Carter as they perform a neighborhood concert in Sacramento, Calif. With people following the mandatory stay-at-home directive, the duet was invited by friends to perform a show. The pair, who perform locally by the name "Be Here Now," has had several appearances canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

TV reported.

Wilkinson saw the woman when he went back to the cellar a second time after the electricity in his house went out, the Bowling Green Daily News reported. He said a young woman with dark hair told him she was "hiding from someone" before she ran away into the street.

The mayor said he doesn't know when the woman started living in his cellar but noted that she did not steal anything from the house.

Man faces charges for hurling Molotov cocktail

DC WASHINGTON — Federal prosecutors announced charges against a man they say threw a lit Molotov cocktail at a police officer sitting in an unmarked car in the nation's capital.

Ashten Nesmith, 23, was accused of walking up to a police officer who had just entered the vehicle outside a police station in northeast Washington, lighting flammable liquid in a bottle and throwing it at the officer, according to federal prosecutors.

The Molotov cocktail hit the police car, bounced off and then exploded, officials said. No one was injured.

Police said Nesmith fled from the scene, but officers chased him on foot and took him into custody. He was charged with arson,

THE CENSUS

2M

The approximate number of chickens to be destroyed at farms in Maryland and Delaware due to coronavirus-related staffing shortages at processing plants. The Baltimore Sun reported that the plants are unable to keep pace with the number of birds that are ready for harvest. Though their extermination methods have been approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association for handling cases of infectious avian disease, activists are raising concerns. Save Delmarva Chickens said it's inhumane to use measures designed to control avian flu on healthy birds.

using and discharging a destructive device during a crime of violence and possessing a destructive device.

Driver in freeway chase faces multiple charges

AZ PHOENIX — A driver who led authorities on a slow-speed freeway car chase from Gilbert through Phoenix faces multiple charges.

Arizona Department of Public Safety officials said Binh Thien Nguyen, 40, was being held on suspicion of charges of unlawful flight from law enforcement, DUI, possession of drug paraphernalia and criminal damage.

They said Nguyen likely faces more charges from Gilbert police, who say the suspect reportedly was yelling and screaming in a parking lot before getting into a Smart Car and driving away.

Police said they tried multiple times to pull Nguyen over, but he didn't stop. DPS troopers used spiked

sticks to puncture the small car's tires and then used a maneuver to stop the vehicle and make an arrest.

In-line skating bandit robs Dunkin' Donuts

NY HICKSVILLE — A robber wearing in-line skates skated off into the night after sticking up a Dunkin' Donuts on Long Island, police said.

Nassau County police said the suspect glided into the Hicksville shop, bought a cup of coffee and then demanded cash while making it seem like he had a gun under his clothing.

The man got away with an undetermined amount of money and was last seen heading in the direction of a Long Island Rail Road station a few blocks away.

Some residents now need to dial 10 digits

SC COLUMBIA — South Carolinians in the 803

area code will now have to dial those three extra digits to make a call.

The 10-digit dialing requirement went into effect April 25 because starting in May, a new 839 area code will be added to the region, news outlets reported.

The 803 area code covers York, Lancaster, Chester, Lexington, Richland, Fairfield and Kershaw counties.

The new area code will only affect brand new phone numbers.

The 839 area code will be the fifth in the state, joining 864 in the Upstate, 803 in the Midlands and 843 and 854 along the coast.

City to end horse-drawn carriage rides next year

IL CHICAGO — The Chicago City Council voted to end horse-drawn carriage rides in the city after Dec. 31.

Alderman Brendan Reilly, whose ward includes the city's central business district, said he has tried to persuade carriage operators to "treat their animals in a humane way." When the violations continued, he had no choice but to push to banish them from city streets, Reilly said.

With the vote, Chicago joins cities such as Salt Lake City and Camden, N.J., that have also banned horse-drawn carriages.

From wire reports

FACES

Church preaches safety

Video from country star urges fans not to panic

By KRISTIN M. HALL
Associated Press

Country star Eric Church doesn't know when concerts might resume in the United States after the spread of the coronavirus, but he wants people to feel safe when they return to hear live music.

The singer known for his often-worn sunglasses sent a message to fans in a new video and tease of a new song that offers his belief in the American resolve to overcome the pandemic.

With echoes of the 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas in his mind, Church recorded the song "Through My Ray Bans," co-written with Luke Laird and Barry Dean, in February about seeing people standing shoulder to shoulder, "like an army of Friday night soldiers."

"It could be sports. It could be music. It could be church. It's that fellowship that we have that makes life worth living," Church said in an interview with The Associated Press.

The virus reminded him of the fear that many people, even himself, felt after the Route 91 Harvest music festival, where Church had played the night before the shooting.

"The thing that shook me about Vegas was, that was my safe place," Church said. "As messed up as the world is, I never in a million years thought that could be a danger area."

Now as tours and festivals are canceled



AP

A recent video from country singer Eric Church teases new music, including a song called "Through My Ray Bans."

or rescheduled or postponed indefinitely, Church wants to remind fans that concerts and gatherings will resume eventually, but urged people in his new video not to give into fear and panic.

"When people come back, they have to feel that it's OK to be there, that they can experience it the way they want to experience it," Church said. "They should be able to go up and throw their arms around the person next to them. They should not be scared about being three feet away and not six."

But Church said he thinks major festivals and touring could be delayed as far out as next year.

"For me, I think it's summer or fall of '21. I am going on the promise of a vaccine. I'm going on the possibility of a therapeutic that could change the game," Church said.

The virus has also upended a lot of plans

for album releases this year, including his own. Prior to the virus spread, Church voluntarily secluded himself in a makeshift studio in the North Carolina mountains to record for a full month with several writers and his band. He wrote and recorded a song each day, ending up with about 28 songs. "It's always intrigued me, a kind of old rock 'n' roll model," Church said. "You write the song in the studio. You record the song the same day."

Even though he hasn't released any songs for download or streaming or to radio yet, he's been living with them a lot longer than he normally does before the public or even the people at his label or management has heard them.

"I don't know if this is an album, if it's two albums, if it's three," he said. "I feel confident enough with the material that people will get to hear all of these songs at some point."

Rolling Stones think new song 'resonates'

The Rolling Stones have unveiled a new song the band thinks is perfect for these coronavirus times.

The legendary band released the four-minute slow-burning bluesy and harmonica-driven "Living in a Ghost Town" on April 23.

"I'm a ghost / Living in a ghost town / You can look for me / But I can't be found," sings frontman Mick Jagger, who wrote it, with guitarist Keith Richards.

Jagger explained that the song was one they were working on long before the global lockdown and the band decided to revisit it in isolation, thinking it "would resonate through the times that we're living in right now," Richards added. "Mick and I decided this one really needed to go to work right now."

The lyrics do certainly sound timely: "I'm going nowhere / Shut up all alone / So much time to lose / Just staring at my phone."

The Stones recently joined forces remotely to perform "You Can't Always Get What You Want" from the "One World: Together At Home" concert.

From The Associated Press



AP

The Rolling Stones — from left, Charlie Watts, Ronnie Wood, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards — have released a new song.

Tribbett's new tune sends positive vibes

Grammy-winning gospel singer Tye Tribbett has fused Kendrick Lamar's hit song "Alright" into a new tune to send a message to people during the coronavirus pandemic: We are going to be all right.

Tribbett released the new song "We Gon' Be Alright" on April 24. The new track interpolates part of Lamar's anthemic 2015 song, which was co-produced by Pharrell and won two Grammy Awards.

Tribbett, 44, said he's hoping to offer some light to the world during a time of darkness. "We Gon' Be Alright," which fuses elements of trap music, includes lyrics like, "Troubles come and go, even on the mountain high or valley low / Never let your faith go, never let your faith go."

"Every time I play the song in my house, my family rushes to dance together and celebrate, even during this pandemic! My prayer is that this song does the same for your house or wherever this song is heard as we hope in the promises of a God who has never failed," Tribbett said in a statement.

Tribbett won the best gospel album and best gospel song Grammys at the 2014 show.

From The Associated Press



AP

Gospel singer Tye Tribbett's new song is called "We Gon' Be Alright."

'Parks and Recreation' cast reunites for fundraiser

The original cast members of "Parks and Recreation" are getting back to work for a coronavirus-related fundraising special.

Amy Poehler, Rashida Jones, Aziz Ansari, Nick Offerman and Adam Scott are among the sitcom's stars to be featured in the half-hour special airing Thursday stateside on NBC.

The story reflects the real-life crisis, with Poehler's Leslie Knope striving to stay in touch with her friends while observing social distancing.

"Like a lot of other people, we were looking for ways to help and felt that bringing these characters back for a night could raise some money," said executive producer Michael Schur. "I sent a hopeful email to the cast and they all got back to me within 45 minutes."

Viewers' donations will go to Feeding America's COVID-19 Response Fund, which is helping food banks serve vulnerable community members, NBC said. Up to \$500,000 in donations made through May 21 will be matched with contributions from NBC Universal, the sitcom's cast, writers and producers, and State Farm and Subaru of America.

"Parks and Recreation," about an Indiana's town idiosyncratic public officials, ended its seven-season run in 2015.

'The Chi' star arrested for drugs, weapons in Mississippi

A fired star of the hit Showtime series "The Chi" who was also featured in the Academy Award-nominated film "Straight Outta Compton" has been arrested on drugs and weapons charges on Mississippi's coast.

Jason Mitchell, who portrayed Brandon Johnson on the cable series' first two seasons, was arrested Wednesday during a traffic stop in Gulfport, Harrison County Sheriff Troy Peterson announced.

Deputies searched Mitchell's SUV and found about 2 pounds of marijuana wrapped in separate packages along with a bag of 1,300 dosage units of Ecstasy, Peterson said. Deputies also found an AK-47 firearm and a Glock 9mm pistol with extended magazines, he said.

Mitchell, 33, of New Orleans, faces multiple counts, including possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute and possession of a firearm by a felon.

Mitchell achieved critical acclaim for his role as rapper Easy-E in "Straight Outta Compton," the story about the rise of the rap group N.W.A., as well as for his work in 2017's "Mudbound."

A third season of "The Chi" a drama about life on the South Side of Chicago, is planned without Mitchell, who was fired amid allegations of misconduct.

Other news

■ **Shirley Knight**, a Kansas-born actress who was nominated for two Oscars early in her career and went on to play an astonishing variety of roles in movies, TV and the stage, died April 22. She was 83. Knight was nominated for two Tonys, winning one. In recent years, she had a recurring role as Phyllis Van de Kamp in the long-running ABC show "Desperate Housewives," gaining one of her many Emmy nominations.

■ **Beyonce** is focusing her coronavirus relief efforts on organizations that have helped communities of color that have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. The superstar announced April 23 that her BEYGOOD charity will partner with Twitter's Jack Dorsey's Start Small campaign to provide the \$6 million relief funds, a variety of groups working to provide basic necessities in cities like Detroit, Houston, New York and New Orleans.

From The Associated Press

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OPINION

US virus response like that of past crises

By DANIEL AKST
Los Angeles Times

If you're groping to understand the disorganization and ineptitude of America's response to the coronavirus, you might find it helpful to know there's a single word that captures the situation perfectly. That word is: normal.

The sad truth is that we've faced many crises in our history, and we almost always make a hash of them. We start with inertia, bestir ourselves to hubris, move on to bungling and spice everything with venality. Situated far from the world's troubles, we are invariably drugged by complacency and handicapped by federalism, the system that gives us so many levels of government to get in each other's way.

Unpreparedness is a signal feature of almost every American crisis, from the Revolutionary War right up to our recent stunning lack of ventilators and masks.

In 1812, for example, Secretary of War William Eustis predicted that we needed only to send some officers into Canada and residents of the British territory would "rally round our standard." In fact, American overconfidence, unreadiness and disorganization led to successive fiascos culminating in the burning of the fledgling nation's capital.

In the Civil War, a crisis for which ever was one, the Union cause was imperiled by timid generals, bad equipment, scarce supplies and rampant fraud. When World War II broke out in Europe in 1939, the

United States had the world's 18th largest army, behind even that of Portugal. In one notorious set of military training exercises, many U.S. soldiers were armed with broomsticks, yet 12 managed to get themselves killed and 200 injured despite the absence of any real enemy. The attack on Pearl Harbor, in 1941, came as a surprise.

The picture just as bleak in civilian crises. John M. Barry, whose books include "The Great Influenza" about the 1918 pandemic, states flatly that, "In the United States, national and local government and public health authorities badly mishandled the epidemic." The federal government, embarking on the crusade of the Great War, suppressed news of the outbreak as part of a draconian crackdown on dissent. Local officials participated in the deception, contributing to the growth of suspicion and the breakdown of mutual aid. "As the epidemic exploded," Barry tells us, "officials almost daily assured the public that the worst was over."

A decade later Uncle Sam met the Great Depression with bewilderment and battled it for years with earnest ineffectuality. A bungling Federal Reserve raised interest rates when it should have lowered them and failed to backstop banks against devastating runs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt tried lots of things, but overall fiscal policy oscillated perversely and may have done little to shorten the nation's ordeal.

The Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, aside from a fleeting sense of unity, produced costly and inconclusive wars. And things have rarely

turned out well when the government has declared "war" in some crisis that is not a military conflict, as in the war on drugs.

The good news is that, in our biggest crises, things usually come out right at the end, though not without a lot of unnecessary suffering and waste. With luck and leadership, we usually manage to mobilize our vast national resources and creativity to vanquish whatever has beset us.

Great crises, however mishandled initially, have also been the occasion for overdue changes. The Depression gave us Social Security, modern securities regulation and a wised-up Fed (itself the belated offspring of the Panic of 1907). The Second World War resulted in the Marshall Plan and helped propel us down the road to equality for black people, women and others. Our latest crisis may finally force us to universalize health care and find a way to rein in its costs. We might also agree that there are good reasons not to move so much manufacturing overseas. As Warren Buffett likes to say, it is never a good idea to bet against America.

Of course, in the darkest crises of the past we were often blessed with great leaders including Washington, Lincoln and FDR. President Donald Trump is something else again. But if we remain true to form, our fumbling will enable the virus to persist right up until Election Day — and eventually oust his presidency.

Daniel Akst, a former columnist and editor at the Los Angeles Times, is a writer in New York's Hudson Valley.

Pandemic has exposed China's dishonesty

By MITT ROMNEY
Special to The Washington Post

America is awakening to China. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that, to a great degree, our very health is in Chinese hands; from medicines to masks, we are at Beijing's mercy. Embarrassed by the revelation of this vulnerability, politicians in Washington will certainly act to remedy our medical dependence — with the usual fanfare and self-congratulation. But China's stranglehold on pharmaceuticals is only a small sliver of its grand strategy for economic, military and geopolitical domination. The West's response must extend much further — it will require a unified strategy among free nations to counter China's trade predation and its corruption of our mutual security.

In recent years, China has succeeded in disproportionately positioning its citizens and proxies with loyalties to the Chinese Communist Party in key international governing bodies, allowing it to expand its geopolitical influence. China relentlessly badgers and bribes nations to avert their leaders' eyes from its egregious abuses of Tibetans, Uighurs and other minorities — as well as its targeting of pro-democracy leaders in Hong Kong. The same methods result in the geopolitical isolation of Taiwan. All the while, China spreads pacifying propaganda throughout the world; even right under our noses, so-called Confucius Institutes peddle propaganda messages in America's colleges and high schools.

China's alarming military buildup is not widely discussed outside unclassified settings, but Americans should not take comfort in our disproportionately large military budget. The government of President Xi Jinping doesn't report its actual defense spending. An open-to-applies analysis demonstrates that China's annual production of military hardware is nearly identi-

cal to ours; but because our military has missions around the world, this means that in the Pacific, where China concentrates its firepower, it will have military superiority. No wonder the Philippines and other Pacific nations have cozier up to their powerful neighbor.

Today, however, Beijing's weapon of choice is economic: The tip of its spear is global industrial predation. China not only steals technology from other nations, it massively subsidizes the industries that determine to have strategic importance. Further, it employs competitive practices that have long been forbidden by developed nations, including bribery, monopoly, currency manipulation and predatory pricing.

As China ascended in the global marketplace, the West indulged its abhorrent industrial policies, hoping it would move toward freedom and adherence to the international rules of commerce. That indulgence exacted a heavy toll. For example, China achieved a breathtaking capture of the global steel market through means that are illegal or impossible elsewhere: pricing far below cost, artificially depressing currency, massive government subsidies and, to be sure, a measure of bribes. Between 2000 and 2009, China more than tripled its global share of steel production, and now it controls more than half of the world's output — resulting in steel plants shuttered around the globe and the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of jobs.

China's predatory pricing tools across the economy — from the high-tech and national security sectors of nanotechnology, telecommunications and artificial intelligence to basic mining and manufacturing. A Chinese conglomerate recently acquired a dominant Indonesian stainless steel company. Indonesia just happens to be the largest producer of the world's nickel, an essential ingredient in the production of stainless steel. Suddenly, Indonesia has

agreed to shut off nickel exports to any of China's foreign competitors. Another near-monopoly is born, thanks to anti-competitive tactics.

When a predator, unbound by the rules followed by its competitors, is allowed to operate in a free market, that market is no longer truly free.

As a first step, President Donald Trump was right to blow the whistle on Xi and apply tariffs. But we must go a good deal further. We must align our negotiating strategy and policies with other nations that adhere to the global rules of trade. This means narrowing trade disputes with our friends and uniting against China's unrelenting abuse. China must understand that it will not have free, unfettered access to any of our economies unless it ceases to employ anti-competitive and predatory practices. It will face a simple choice: Play by the global rules, or face steep economic penalties.

Further action should be applied in national security sectors such as artificial intelligence, telecommunications and, as we now know, pharmaceuticals. The free nations must collectively agree that we will buy these products only from free nations. In addition to protecting our security, such an agreement would incentivize our research and industrial institutions to invest in these areas, knowing that they will not be undercut by Chinese predatory practices.

China has done what we have allowed it to do: to save a few dollars, we have looked the other way. COVID-19 has exposed China's dishonesty for all to see. And it is a clarion call for America to seize the moment. When the immediate health crisis has passed, the United States should convene like-minded nations to develop a common strategy aimed at dissuading China from pursuing its predatory path.

Mitt Romney, a Republican, represents Utah in the U.S. Senate.

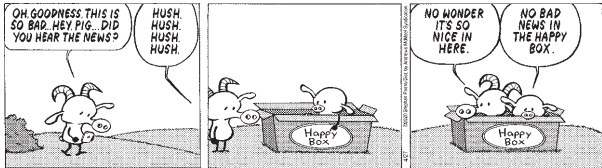
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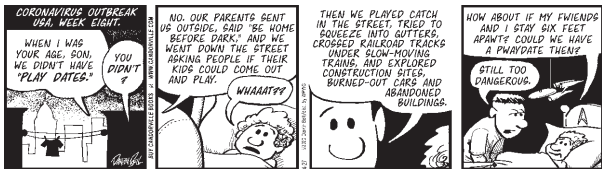
Pearls Before Swine



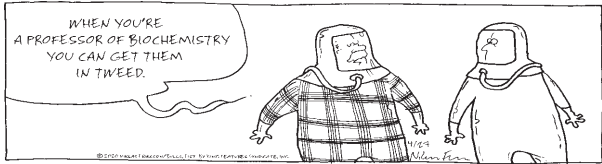
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15									16			
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41					42	43				44	45	46
47						48						
49						50				51		

ACROSS

- Auctioneer's cry
- Valentine's Day mo.
- Streetcar
- John of "Saturday Night Fever"
- Fury
- "Wonder Woman" publisher
- "Understood"
- Knock
- Potpourri bag
- 20 Whale's home
- 23 iPhone voice
- 24 Chat
- 25 MRI alternatives
- 28 Threer, in Rome
- 29 Marina sights
- 30 Tic-tac-toe win
- 32 Lots for mobile homes
- 34 Get bigger
- 35 Suffix for billion
- 36 Hopping mad
- 37 Gift giver's words
- 40 Mil. morale booster
- 41 On the rocks
- 42 Old IBM product knockoffs
- 47 The Mets' old home
- 48 Put on the air
- 49 Sacred
- 50 Salt source

- Right on the map?

DOWN

- Norm (Abbr.)
- Tolkien monster
- Varnish ingredient
- "New World Symphony" composer
- Coin toss
- And so on (Abbr.)
- Members of rock bands
- One of the Nixons
- Impetuous
- Pulitzer winner James
- Bump into
- Yemen neighbor
- Curved lines
- 20 Sluggish Mel
- 21 Novelist Caleb
- 22 Hgt.
- 23 Tent securer
- 25 Taints
- 26 Asta's feeder
- 27 Chimney buildup
- 29 Scott of "Happy Days"
- 31 Have debts
- 33 Check-in time?
- 34 Furrow
- 36 Capri, e.g.
- 37 Go angling
- 38 Twice cuatro
- 39 Stagger
- 40 Golden State sch.
- 43 Bee follower
- 44 Actress Vardalos
- 45 Curvy letter
- 46 Fixed

Answer to Previous Puzzle

M	U	S	S	S	P	A	R	C	N	N
B	R	I	O	W	I	L	D	L	A	Y
A	G	A	L	E	P	P	S	E	T	E
S	E	M	I	A	S	A	L	O	O	T
			D	S	T		C	S	I	
S	P	E	C	K	S		A	C	Q	U
A	S	Y	O	U			O	U	N	C
P	A	E	L	L	A		G	L	I	D
			O	L	E		A	D	D	
J	E	E	R		N	O	N	S	E	E
I	N	K		T	E	N	D	O	L	D
M	I	G		R	A	C	E	A	L	G
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4-27

CRYPTOQUIP

YWDDR MAZGAE TKA QPGQ

ZEAQD-IUHHUM AD GKU YIAAE

TKPIU GEUFGPDH CFGPDGQ:

GKU IAGWQ CKRQPZPFD.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF A MONASTERY HEAD MAKES A MONK FINISH A TEDIOUS CHORE, IT'S BEEN DONE BY FORCE OF ABBOT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals N

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NFL DRAFT

49ers land Trent Williams to replace reeling Staley

By JOSH DUBOW

Associated Press

The San Francisco 49ers acquired one of the NFL's best tackle and said goodbye to another.

The defending NFC champion 49ers acquired seventh-round Pro Bowl left tackle Trent Williams from the Washington Redskins on Saturday for a pair of draft picks and later announced that six-time Pro Bowler Joe Staley is retiring. "He's as good as a player and warrior and person as any I've ever been around," coach Kyle Shanahan said. "I love the guy. It was really hard on us when we realized he wasn't going to play this year."

But it made it easier that the Niners were able to find a replacement. They sent a fifth-round pick in this year's draft and a 2021 third-rounder to acquire Williams, who still must pass a physical for the trade to be finalized.

The 49ers had a big need at left tackle because Staley said he planned to retire. He announced it last Saturday, saying

a deteriorating neck injury led to his decision to retire after 13 seasons. Staley also missed nine games last season with injuries to his leg and finger.

"The game of football has been a true passion of mine since I was 8, but my body is telling me it is time," Staley said in a statement. "Football is a physical sport and I have given my all to the game and pushed my limits. Last season was a dream to be a part of, having the opportunity to chase a championship. But, it was by far the most difficult on me and my family."

Staley was a first-round pick in 2007 and played 181 games over 13 seasons. He was selected to the NFL's all-decade team for the 2010s and played a big role in San Francisco's runs to the Super Bowl following the 2012 and '19 seasons.

Staley leaves a big void but the Niners were appreciative that he told them of his plans before the draft so they could make the move for Williams.

Williams sat out the entire 2019 season because of a dispute with

Washington's front office. The Redskins weren't able to get the compensation they wanted at last year's trade deadline and kept Williams. He renewed his request for a trade this offseason and was finally dealt.

"Trent Williams is a first-round value, that's what he is," Redskins vice president of player personnel Kyle Smith said. "That's what the tape tells you. That's what everybody knows. His circumstance and everything that has gone into this for two years or whatever it's been, that's what's devalued him."

The deal reunites Williams with Shanahan, who was the offensive coordinator in Washington when Williams was drafted fourth overall in 2010.

"Skill-set wise, Trent is similar to Joe," Shanahan said. "They are two of the most athletic guys I've been around at that position."

Williams made the Pro Bowl every season from 2012-18 and is considered one of the best left tackles in the league when healthy.



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

San Francisco 49ers running back Matt Breida was traded to the Miami Dolphins for a fifth-round draft pick on Saturday.

The 49ers made two more trades Saturday, sending away veterans whom they didn't need anymore.

San Francisco dealt running back Matt Breida to Miami for the 153rd pick used on West Virginia offensive lineman Colton McKivitz.

Last year Breida rushed for 623 yards in 13 games but saw little action late in the season.

Breida was available because of a logjam at running back with Raheem Mostert, Tevin Coleman,

Jerick McKinnon and Jeff Wilson Jr. all under contract.

The Niners then traded receiver Marquise Goodwin to Philadelphia to move up from No. 210 to 190, where they took Georgia blocking tight end Charlie Woerner.

San Francisco had been looking to unload the speedy Goodwin all offseason. He had 35 catches in 20 games the past two seasons.

AP Sports Writer Stephen Whyno contributed to this report.

Team-by-team picks

- Arizona**
- (1) Isaiah Simmons, lb, Clemson.
 - (2) Jalen Jones, cornerback, LSU.
 - (144) Leki Fotu, dt, Utah.
 - (158) Lawrence Ladner, dt, LSU.
 - (6) Evan Weaver, lb, California.
 - (122) Eno Benjamin, rb, Arizona State.
- Atlanta**
- (1) A.J. Terrell, cb, Clemson.
 - (147) Marlon Davidson, lb, Auburn.
 - (378) Matt Hennessy, c, Temple.
 - (43) Mykal Walker, lb, Fresno State.
 - (134) Jayvin Hawkins, cb, California.
 - (728) Sterling Horford, rb, Syracuse.
- Buffalo**
- (28) Patrick Queen, lb, LSU.
 - (155) J. Robbins, rb, Ohio State.
 - (371) Justin Madubuike, dt, Texas A&M.
 - (40) Devin Duvernay, rb, Texas.
 - (386) Malik Harrison, lb, Ohio State.
 - (106) Tyre Phillips, g, Mississippi State.
 - (143) Ben Brice, rb, Mississippi State.
 - (170) Broderick Washington, dt, Texas Tech.
 - (620) James Proche, rb, Southern Methodist.
 - (219) Gene Stone, s, Iowa.
- Buffalo**
- (54) A.J. Epenesa, de, Iowa.
 - (386) Zack Moss, rb, Utah.
 - (128) Gabriel Davis, wr, UConn.
 - (167) Jake Fromm, qb, Georgia.
 - (208) Vion Bass, c, Georgia Southern.
 - (207) Isaiah Hodgins, wr, Oregon State.
 - (729) Dane Jackson, cb, Pittsburg.
- Carolina**
- (7) Derrick Brown, dt, Auburn.
 - (28) Jere Crossen, rb, Penn St.
 - (64) Jeremy Chinn, s, Southern Illinois.
 - (195) Troy Pride, cb, Notre Dame.
 - (152) Joe Reed, wr, Virginia.
 - (184) Braxton Roy, dt, Baylor.
 - (106) Stanley Thomas, lb, cb, FIU.
- Chicago**
- (243) Cole Kmet, t, Notre Dame.
 - (50) Jaylon Smith, cb, Utah.
 - (125) Gabe Gillispie, rb, Tulane.
 - (163) Kindred Wildor, cb, Georgia Southern.
 - (121) Russell Munn, lb, Tulane.
 - (226) Arlington Hanks, rb, Colorado.
 - (227) Lachavious Simmons, s, Tennessee State.
- Chicago**
- (1) J. Burrow, qb, LSU.
 - (33) Te Higgins, lb, Clemson.
 - (65) Logan Wilson, lb, Wyoming.
 - (107) Adam Davis, dt, Appalachian St.
 - (147) Khalid Kareem, lb, No. Carolina.
 - (618) Hakeem Alden, lb, Kansas.
 - (108) Markus Barkus, lb, Kansas.
- Cleveland**
- (110) Jadeveon Williams, lb, Alabama.
 - (44) Grant Delpit, s, LSU.
 - (109) Jonathan Phillips, dt, Missouri.
 - (387) J. Williams, lb, LSU.
 - (115) Harrison Bryant, te, Florida Atlantic.
 - (163) Tre Harris, c, North Carolina.
 - (6187) Donovan Peoples-Jones, wr, Michigan.
- Cleveland**
- (1) Tee Dee Lamb, wr, Oklahoma.
 - (51) Trevon Diggs, cb, Alabama.
 - (162) Neville Gallimore, dt, Iowa.
 - (123) Reggie Robinson II, cb, Tulsa.
 - (146) Tyrell Bradeley, lb, Texas.
 - (179) Bradeley Anae, dt, Utah.
 - (231) Ben DiNucci, qb, James Madison.

- Dallas**
- (115) Jerry Jeudy, wr, Alabama.
 - (246) K.J. Hamler, lb, Oklahoma.
 - (163) Michael Ojemudia, cb, Iowa.
 - (83) Lloyd Cheshire, rb, LSU.
 - (395) McTelvin Agnew, dt, Arkansas.
 - (118) Albert Okuongba, rb, Missouri.
 - (1178) Justin Strand, lb, Wake Forest.
 - (1182) Netane Mui, g, Fresno State.
 - (252) Tyrice Cleveland, rb, Florida.
 - (254) Derek Tuszka, de, North Dakota State.
- Detroit**
- (1) Jeff Okudah, cb, Ohio State.
 - (23) D'Andre Swift, rb, Ohio State.
 - (67) Julian Okwara, de, Notre Dame.
 - (75) Jonah Jackson, g, Ohio State.
 - (121) Logan Stenberg, lb, Kentucky.
 - (166) Quintez Cephus, wr, Wisconsin.
 - (172) Jason Hurlley, rb, New Mexico State.
 - (6197) John Persinich, dt, Utah.
 - (7235) Jahvon Cornett, dt, Ohio State.
- Green Bay**
- (26) Jordan Love, qb, Utah State.
 - (62) A.J. Dillon, rb, Boston College.
 - (94) Josiah Deguara, te, Cincinnati.
 - (175) Kamari Martin, lb, Minnesota.
 - (6192) Jon Runyan, g, Michigan.
 - (208) Jake Hanson, c, Oregon.
 - (209) Simon Stepaniak, g, Indiana.
 - (236) Vernon Scott, db, Texas Christian.
 - (7242) Jonathan Garvin, de, Miami.
- Houston**
- (240) Ross Blacklock, dt, TCU.
 - (390) Jonathan Greenard, lb, Florida.
 - (126) Charlie Heck, rb, North Carolina.
 - (141) John Reid, cb, Penn State.
 - (5171) Isaiah Allen, rb, Rhode Island.
- Indianapolis**
- (34) Michael Pittman Jr., rb, Southern Cal.
 - (41) Jonathan Taylor, rb, Wisconsin.
 - (85) Julian Mack, lb, Utah.
 - (203) Jacob Eason, dt, Michigan State.
 - (149) Danny Pinter, g, Ball State.
 - (193) Rob Windsor, dt, Michigan State.
 - (211) Isaiah Rodgers, db, Massachusetts.
 - (212) Henderson Patton, wr, Washington State.
 - (6213) Jordan Glasgow, rb, Chicago.
- Jacksonville**
- (1) C.J. Uzomaka, dt, LSU.
 - (20) Klavon Hamilton, lb, LSU.
 - (146) Shaquell Sherrill, rb, Colorado.
 - (131) Davon Caission, dt, Ohio State.
 - (139) Ben Barchett, dt, St. John's (Minn.).
 - (4137) Jonah Scott, cb, Michigan State.
 - (140) Shaquille Quarterman, lb, Miami.
 - (157) Darius Slay, cb, Missouri State.
 - (156) Collin Johnson, wr, Texas.
 - (189) Jake Luton, q, Memphis.
 - (5206) Tyrell Davis, te, Georgia Tech.
 - (7223) Chris Carson, rb, Memphis.
- Kansas City**
- (23) Clyde Edwards-Helaire, rb, LSU.
 - (163) Willie Gay Jr., rb, Mississippi State.
 - (396) Lucas Nnamdi, dt, TCU.
 - (138) Jamar Smith, rb, North Carolina Tech.
 - (177) Michael Daniel, te, Michigan.
- Las Vegas**
- (112) Henry Ruggs III, wr, Alabama.
 - (119) Damon Arnette, cb, Iowa State.
 - (380) Lynn Bowden Jr., wr, Kentucky.
 - (181) Bryan Edwards, rb, North Carolina.
 - (100) Tanner Muse, c, Clemson.
 - (4139) Amik Robertson, cb, Louisiana Tech.

- Los Angeles**
- (6) Justin Herbert, qb, Oregon.
 - (23) Kenneth Murray, lb, Oklahoma.
 - (371) John Simpson, g, Clemson.
 - (412) Joshua Kelley, rb, UCLA.
 - (5151) Joe Reed, wr, Florida.
 - (6186) Alohi Kilama, s, Notre Dame.
 - (7220) K.J. Hill, wr, Ohio State.
- Los Angeles**
- (252) Cam Akers, rb, Florida State.
 - (257) Van Jefferson, wr, Florida.
 - (84) Terrell Burgess, s, Utah.
 - (104) Trent Williams, lb, Alabama.
 - (136) Bryce Hopkins, te, Purdue.
 - (6189) Jordan Fuller, s, Ohio State.
 - (7234) Jake Johnston, lb, Baylor.
 - (234) Sam Slomay, c, Miami (Ohio).
 - (7250) Tremayne Antrunum, g, Clemson.
- Miami**
- (5) Tua Tagovailoa, qb, Alabama.
 - (118) Austin Jackson, dt, Southern Cal.
 - (30) Noah Igbinoghosa, cb, Auburn.
 - (209) Robert Hunt, dt, Louisiana-Lafayette.
 - (50) Raekwon Davis, dt, Alabama.
 - (112) Solomon Kinney, g, Georgia.
 - (700) Brandon Jones, s, Texas.
 - (6112) Solomon Kinney, g, Georgia.
 - (154) Jason Strowbridge, de, North Carolina.
 - (5164) Curtis Weaver, te, Boise State.
 - (6185) Blake Ferguson, lb, LSU.
 - (7246) Malcolm Perry, wr, Navy.
- Minnesota**
- (122) Justin Jefferson, wr, LSU.
 - (331) Jeff Gladney, qb, TCU.
 - (582) Ezra Cleveland, dt, Boise State.
 - (388) Cameron Dantzler, cb, Mississippi State.
 - (141) D.J. Wommum, de, South Carolina.
 - (4130) James Lynch, de, Baylor.
 - (141) D.J. Wommum, de, South Carolina.
 - (5169) Harrison Hand, cb, Temple.
 - (5176) K.J. Osborn, wr, Miami.
 - (603) Blake Brandel, g, Oregon State.
 - (6205) John Metellus, s, Michigan.
 - (7225) Kenrick Williams, g, Michigan State.
 - (244) Nate Stanley, db, Iowa.
 - (240) Brian Cole, g, Washington State.
 - (253) Kyle Hinton, g, Washburn.
- New England**
- (237) Kyle Dugger, s, Louisville.
 - (60) Josh Uche, lb, Michigan.
 - (603) Antwan Jennings, lb, Alabama.
 - (91) Devin Asiasi, te, UCLA.
 - (124) Deante Keene, te, Virginia Tech.
 - (1159) Justin Rohrer, c, Marshall.
 - (1159) Justin Rohrer, c, Marshall.
 - (6195) Justin Herron, g, Michigan.
 - (6204) Cassius Mulla, lb, Wyoming.
 - (230) Austin Wood, dt, Memphis.
- New Orleans**
- (24) Cesar Ruiz, qb, Alabama.
 - (74) Zack Baun, lb, Wisconsin.
 - (140) Adam Trautman, te, Dayton.
 - (240) Tommy Sledge, cb, Mississippi State.
- N.Y. Giants**
- (4) Andrew Thomas, lb, Georgia.
 - (236) Xavier McKinney, s, Alabama.
 - (59) Matt Peart, c, Connecticut.
 - (4110) Darion Holmes, cb, UCLA.
 - (5150) Shane Lemieux, g, Oregon.
 - (1887) Cameron Brown, lb, North Carolina.
 - (2128) Carter Coughlin, db, Minnesota.
 - (238) T.J. Brunson, dt, North Carolina.
 - (7247) Chris Williamson, cb, Minnesota.
 - (7255) Tae Crowder, lb, Alabama.

- N.Y. Jets**
- (111) Mekhi Becton, dt, Louisville.
 - (595) Denzel Mims, rb, Baylor.
 - (368) Ashton Davis, s, California.
 - (379) Kahlil Zang, de, Florida.
 - (124) La'Mical Perine, lb, Oklahoma.
 - (4125) James Morgan, cb, Florida International.
 - (4129) Cameron Clarke, g, Charlotte.
 - (1185) Bryce Hall, cb, Virginia.
 - (6191) Braden Mann, p, Texas A&M.
- Philadelphia**
- (121) Jalen Carter, wr, TCU.
 - (513) Jalen Hurts, qb, Oklahoma.
 - (103) Davion Taylor, lb, Colorado.
 - (127) K'Von Wallace, s, Clemson.
 - (4148) Jack Driscoll, dt, Auburn.
 - (5168) John Hightower, wr, Boise State.
 - (6190) Shaun Bradberry, lb, Temple.
 - (6200) Quetz Watkins, wr, Southern Mississippi.
 - (201) Prince Tate Wanogho, dt, Auburn.
 - (7233) Casey Toohill, de, Stanford.
- Pittsburgh**
- (249) Chase Claypool, wr, Notre Dame.
 - (102) Alex Highsmith, wr, Notre Dame.
 - (310) Anthony McFarland, rb, Maryland.
 - (4150) Kevin Dotson, g, Louisiana-Lafayette.
 - (188) Antoine Brooks Jr., s, Maryland.
 - (7232) Carlos Davis, dt, Nebraska.
- San Francisco**
- (114) Jauan Kinlaw, dt, South Carolina.
 - (253) Brandon Aiyuk, wr, Arizona State.
 - (5153) Colton McKivitz, dt, West Virginia.
 - (190) Charlie Woerner, te, Georgia.
 - (7217) Jauan Jennings, wr, Tennessee.
- Seattle**
- (7217) Jordon Brockhouse, lb, Texas Tech.
 - (488) Darrell Taylor, de, Tennessee.
 - (609) Damien Lewis, g, LSU.
 - (133) Colby Parkinson, te, Stanford.
 - (144) DeeJay Dallas, rb, Miami.
 - (107) Alton Robinson, dt, Syracuse.
 - (214) Seattle, Freddie Swain, wr, Florida.
 - (7251) Stephen Sullivan, te, Iowa.
 - (113) Tristan Wirgin, lb, Iowa.
 - (45) Antoine Winfield Jr., s, Minnesota.
 - (376) Ke'Shawn Vaughn, rb, Vanderbilt.
 - (5161) Tyler Johnson, wr, Minnesota.
 - (1480) Khalil Davis, g, Nebraska.
 - (7241) Chapele Russell, lb, Temple.
 - (2445) Raymond Calais, lb, Louisiana-Lafayette.
- Tampa Bay**
- (129) Isaiah Evans, dt, Georgia.
 - (611) Kristian Fulton, cb, Georgia.
 - (393) Darrington Evans, rb, Appalachian State.
 - (147) La'rell Murchison, dt, North Carolina State.
 - (7224) Cole McDonald, qb, Hawaii.
 - (240) Chaz Jones, dt, Marshall.
- Washington**
- (2) Chase Young, lb, Ohio State.
 - (66) Antonio Gibson, wr, Memphis.
 - (1088) Saahdiq Ismail, cb, LSU.
 - (142) Antonio Gandy III, rb, New Liberty.
 - (5156) Keith Smith, c, San Diego State.
 - (162) Khaleke Hudson, lb, Michigan.
 - (7210) Cameron Curtis, rb, Kansas.
 - (7229) James Smith-Williams, de, North Carolina State.

NFL DRAFT

SEC-ond to none: LSU, Bama lead the way

Southeastern Conference runs away with the most number of picks again

By BARRY WILNER
Associated Press

Maybe the Southeastern Conference should simply hold onto its players and become part of the NFL.

The home of national champion LSU and perennial contenders Alabama, Georgia and Auburn, the SEC dominated the first four rounds of the NFL Draft before the flow of talent slowed to a trickle. Or the conference finally began running out of top prospects.

The top four rounds are where the vast majority of pro starters are found. So beginning with LSU quarterback Joe Burrow, who went first overall to the Bengals, the SEC provided the mother lode. And by the time this draft was over, 63 players had come from its 14 teams — well, 13, because Ole Miss was ignored. LSU sent 14, tying the most in a seven-round draft, followed by Alabama with nine. Not quite a record, because the SEC had 64 selections a year ago. But this grab bag was further proof of its place atop college football.

"I think it's really easy to see NFL players when you watch as many players get drafted from the SEC and from that conference," Titans coach Mike Vrabel said after his team grabbed Georgia tackle Isaiah Wilson. LSU cornerback Kristian Fulton. "But there's great players in every conference. It's just you don't have to look too far to see them play against some really talented players."

The Lions noticed. They took Georgia running back D'Andre Swift and Kentucky guard Logan Stenberg.

"The SEC, I would argue, is one of the top one or two conferences in college football. I think a lot of people say it is the best conference," Detroit general manager Bob Quinn said. "The competition that's in that conference — from LSU to Alabama to Auburn to Georgia to all those schools — and some of the other teams have really, really good players. So the level of competition, they get the high recruits, they really do."

Nearly every NFL club will have an LSU Tiger or member of the Crimson Tide on its roster by next week.

As the third day of this unusual draft concluded, it became clear that concerns about communication problems cropping up were vastly overblown. Clunky at times, poignant at others, and exceptionally entertaining in spots, the draft has done what Commissioner Roger Goodell hoped.

Sure, there were awkward moments, but those come even when the draft is a megaevent drawing hundreds of thousands of fans to the "Rocky Steps" in Philadelphia or lower Broadway in Nashville. Goodell has insisted the sport-

ing world needed the draft to be held on time. And the amount of eyeballs watching has been, well, an eye-opening number. Late in Saturday's final round, the league said it had gone over \$100 million in total funds raised in all its efforts to battle the coronavirus. The telethon accompanying the draft raised more than \$6.6 million for six organizations involved in coronavirus relief.

NFL general managers also put together donations, initiated by the Eagles' Howie Roseman, with each giving at least \$8,000 for every selection in this draft.

The NFL matched every telethon donation on Friday and Saturday.

"We're forced to adapt here and change and do this differently, but it's actually been a lot of great learning," Goodell said. "We've seen some things that we've maybe called 'stumbled on' that really, I think, will be elements of drafts going into the future. The ability to use the virtual platforms in a way that we really didn't think about until we were forced to."

"And so I think we're really going to be able to make future drafts even better because we're going to be able to combine it with the core elements that we've had. But I think that's one of the things about the draft, it just keeps evolving and it keeps getting better because we keep learning."

The league even awarded the 2022 draft to Las Vegas after all events on the Strip for this year were canceled due to the nationwide shutdown of large gatherings to curb the spread of the virus.

To open Saturday, Appalachian State had its second player chosen, linebacker Akeem Davis-Gaither, who went to Cincinnati. The Sun Belt's defensive player of the year was a standout at the Senior Bowl — a game the Bengals coaching staff worked.

The Redskins dealt their unhappy veteran tackle Trent Williams to San Francisco on Saturday morning, and then chose LSU's Saadiq Charles, who has been



Alabama linebacker Terrell Lewis hits LSU quarterback Joe Burrow during a Nov. 9 game in Tuscaloosa, Ala. Burrow was the first player taken in the NFL Draft and Lewis went in the third round.

plagued by off-field issues and served a six-game suspension.

The Niners, who later announced the retirement of longtime standout left tackle Joe Staley, sent a fifth-round pick in this year's draft and a 2021 third-rounder to acquire Williams.

The first quarterback chosen on Day 3 was Washington's Jacob Eason, who went to Indianapolis. The Colts, of course, signed Philip Rivers as a free agent and still have incumbent Jacoby Brissett. Both have contracts only through 2020, though.

Eason lost out to Jake Fromm at Georgia, then transferred to Washington. Fromm finally went 167th overall to Buffalo, which has a young QB in Josh Allen. Fromm likely was hurt by a mediocre combine performance. He was taken well after the Jets got Florida International QB James Morgan at 125th.

Carolina pulled off a new one by choosing nothing but defensive players, seven in all. Including, naturally, the seventh overall choice, DT Derrick Brown of Auburn. Of the SEC.

By the numbers

63

SEC players taken in the 2020 NFL Draft, the most of any conference, one shy of the SEC's 2019 record.

14

LSU players selected this year, most of any team, matching the record set by Ohio State in 2004.

SOURCE: Associated Press

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Cornerback Kristian Fulton was selected by the Tennessee Titans in the second round of the draft, one of 14 LSU players taken.

NFL DRAFT

Hands off: Pack keeps away from receivers in draft

By STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

The Green Bay Packers acquired Aaron Rodgers' potential successor but didn't give their star quarterback any new wide receivers.

In a draft heralded for its receiving depth, the Packers opted against taking a single player at a position that was widely considered a major need.

The Packers traded up four spots in the first round to take Utah State quarterback Jordan Love with the 26th overall pick. By the time they drafted again late in the second round, 13 receivers already had been taken.

"We felt (the receiver class) was really strong at the top," general manager Brian Gutekunst said. "I don't know as we went through the middle and the end, that we felt it was as strong as maybe others did."

"I thought the top was one of the stronger drafts at the wide receiver class that I can remember, but the runs went pretty early, and once we got to a certain spot, with the group that we had coming back, it wasn't like we weren't looking to add to that competition. We just felt there weren't a lot of great candidates that were locks to make our team next year."

Davante Adams is the only Packer who caught as many as 50 passes or accumulated as many as 500 yards receiving last season. The Packers' biggest offseason addition to their receiving corps is Devin Funchess, who played just one game for Indianapolis last season before going on injured reserve with a broken collarbone.

"I do think we have talent and depth at that position," coach Matt LaFleur said.

The lack of receivers was perhaps the biggest surprise of a draft in which the Packers focused on solving potential long-term issues. How much a team that finished a game short of the Super Bowl last season improved its 2020 fortunes is up to debate.

The Packers used their first-round pick on Love, who will likely spend his first couple of seasons backing up Rodgers. They drafted Boston College running back A.J. Dillon in the second round when they already have Aaron Jones, who rushed for 16 touchdowns and 1,084 yards last year.

Green Bay added Cincinnati tight end Josiah Deguara in the third round and Minnesota linebacker Kamal Martin in the fifth round. The Packers selected three offensive linemen in the sixth round by taking Michigan guard/tackle Jon Runyan Jr., Oregon center Jake Hanson and Illinois guard Simon Stepaniak. They chose TCU safety Vernon

Scott and Miami defensive end Jonathan Garvin in the seventh round.

QB questions

The success of this draft likely will depend on whether Love eventually develops into the kind of player who can continue Green Bay's three-decade run of quality quarterback play.

His arrival already has produced plenty of speculation regarding how much longer Rodgers will stay in Green Bay, no matter how much the Packers attempt to downplay that.

Emphasizing the run?

Green Bay's draft strategy suggests that the Packers may adopt a run-oriented approach, though Gutekunst cautioned against reading too much into that.

"I don't really think any of the personnel acquisitions that we made over the last three days were an attempt to kind of transition to that," Gutekunst said. "They were the right players at the right time."

The Packers will have solid depth at running back with Dillon joining Jones and Jamaal Williams, who both could become free agents next year. Deguara also can help with his ability to play fullback and H-back.

Family ties

Runyan is the son of former NFL offensive tackle Jon Runyan, who played from 1996-2009 before serving two terms as a Republican congressman from New Jersey. The elder Runyan now is the NFL's vice president of policy and rules administration.

Runyan said he'd take a lesson he received from his dad to heart while trying to "kind of be that nasty guy on the field that gets in everybody's heads."

"I remember one time in eighth grade, my dad caught me patting some defensive player on the back after he made a good hit, and (my dad) gave me a stern talking-to after that game and told me never to do that again," Runyan said. "That kind of changed my whole perspective on how to play the game."

Recovering from injury

Stepaniak tore his anterior cruciate ligament during a practice before the Gator Bowl but said he is progressing well and hopes to be ready for training camp.

Martin, who played eight games for Minnesota last season due to a knee injury, said he's "way ahead of where I'm supposed to be" in his recovery and that the situation shouldn't cause any issues.



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

Michigan linebacker Josh Uche, right, tackles Maryland quarterback Ryan Brand. Uche was selected by New England in the second round, one of three linebackers the Patriots selected.

Patriots don't select QB, but address several other needs

By KYLE HIGHTOWER
Associated Press

BOSTON — The Patriots didn't find a replacement for Tom Brady in the draft, if that was even possible.

But they did address almost every other one of their needs.

New England entered the draft with 12 picks and after making several trades over three days wound up selecting 10 players.

Patriots coach Bill Belichick acknowledged the team made an attempt to add a third quarterback, but it simply didn't work out.

"The bottom line is we're evaluating the position along with all the other ones," he said. "If we feel like we find the right situation, we certainly draft them. We've drafted them in multiple years in multiple points in the draft. It didn't work out the last three days. It wasn't by design. It could have, but it didn't."

Belichick said the Patriots would address the position via the undrafted free agent market. J'Mar Smith of Louisiana Tech is a possibility.

For now, second-year player Jarrett Stidham and former Brady backup Brian Hoyer remain the only quarterbacks on the roster.

New England made four picks on defense, which was hit hard in free agency by the departures of

linebackers Kyle Van Noy, Jamie Collins and Elandon Roberts, safety Duron Harmon and defensive tackle Danny Shelton.

The Patriots began by selecting safety Kyle Dugger from Division II Lenoir-Rhyne and added three linebackers with various skill sets in Michigan's John Uche, Alabama's Anfernee Jennings and Wyoming's Cassh Malula.

Offensive line help

The remaining picks were used to target offensive needs, with three used to bolster the line.

The tight end position fell off significantly last season following the retirement of Rob Gronkowski, who came out of retirement before the draft to rejoin Brady in Tampa Bay. New England hopes Devin Asiasi (UCLA) and Dalton Keene (Virginia Tech) can provide a longer-term solution after Matt LaCosse, Ben Watson and Ryan Izzo combined for 36 catches and two touchdowns last season.

The line will get some size with the selection of 340-pound guard Michael Onwenu (Michigan) and guard Justin Herron (Wake Forest) in the sixth round. New England also took Memphis center Dustin Woodward in the seventh round with its final pick. Woodward has a great shot to make the team. He played in every game during his time at Memphis, including 52 consecutive starts.

Old school: Steelers focus on seniors

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The Pittsburgh Steelers love to pick younger players. In this year's draft, not so much.

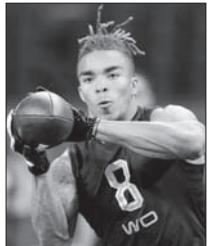
While general manager Kevin Colbert stressed it was coincidental that the Steelers used five of their six picks on seniors, if there ever was a spring to tilt toward prospects with an extra year of seasoning, this might be it.

Neither Colbert nor head coach Mike Tomlin — or the rest of the NFL for that matter — knows how things will shake out over the next few months, with the U.S. among the hardest-hit countries in the global coronavirus pandemic. Adjusting from college to the pros can be difficult during a normal

offseason. And there is nothing normal about this one.

Still, Colbert insisted the decision to take wide receiver Chase Claypool, linebacker Alex Highsmith, offensive lineman Kevin Dotson, safety Antoine Brooks and defensive tackle Carlos Davis — all of whom are on pace to graduate by the end of the summer — was based on their potential, not necessarily their experience.

"It's just the way it broke for us this year," Colbert said Saturday. "We're very comfortable with that. We always try to catch them younger because they're a little fresher. The senior usually comes in at a different maturity level because he finished school or he's close to finishing school. ... We had no plan to do that."



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Notre Dame wide receiver Chase Claypool is one of five seniors the Steelers selected.

MMA/SPORTS BRIEFS/NBA

UFC 249 to be held May 9

Organization plans three events in Florida next month without fans

By GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

The UFC is returning to competition on May 9 for three shows without fans in eight days in Jacksonville, Fla.

The mixed martial arts promotion announced its plans Friday to return to action after postponing and canceling several shows due to the coronavirus pandemic.

UFC 249 will be held May 9 at VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena in Jacksonville with no fans in attendance. The pay-per-view show will still be headlined by Tony Ferguson's interim lightweight title bout against Justin Gaethje.

UFC President Dana White said he also plans to hold shows on May 13 and May 16 at the same arena in northern Florida. Only "essential personnel" will be in the arena, according to White.

"I can't wait to deliver some great fights for the fans," White said in a statement. "My team is ready to go and the fighters are excited to get back in there with these back-to-back events."

The UFC has been out of action since holding a full fight card in an empty arena in Brazil on March 14. But White has been determined to return to action while the rest of the sports world remains shut down.

UFC 249 was almost held on tribal land in central California on April 18, but the show was postponed April 9 at the insistence of ESPN and Disney, the UFC's broadcast partners. Prominent California state officials were opposed to the UFC's plan to hold a show there. However, the promotion's plans have satisfied Florida officials, including the Florida State Boxing Commission, which regulates MMA in the state.

"The UFC organization is a renowned entertainment brand that's presented a safe and sensible plan to use this Jacksonville location, and we are thrilled to have our city highlighted nationally," Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry said.

ESPN also is on board with White's current plan, according to a statement issued by the network: "Sports play an important role in people's lives and can bring moments of escape in challenging times. We look forward to bringing UFC to fans again."

The UFC issued a brief statement about its health



JULIO CORTES/AP

UFC president Dana White says his organization is returning to competition on May 9 with three shows in eight days in Jacksonville, Fla.

and safety precautions for the shows in Florida. The promotion says all athletes and staff will be held to "a number of precautionary measures, such as participating in advanced medical screenings and temperature checks and following social distancing guidelines."

UFC 249 will include two title fights, with bantamweight champ Henry Cejudo defending his belt against former champion Dominick Cruz. The card also includes a heavyweight bout between contenders Francis Ngannou and Jairzinho Rozenstruik, along with a matchup of veteran contenders Anthony Pettis and Donald "Cowboy" Cerrone.

Only a few UFC fighters have voiced concern about White's determination to keep fighting amid the pandemic, and most have been publicly eager to return despite the worldwide health concerns. MMA fighters traditionally don't get paid unless they compete, although Bellator and other promotions have given aid to their fighters in recent weeks after shutting down.



CHRIS SEWARD/AP

On Saturday, Wake Forest announced it has fired men's basketball coach Danny Manning. His record at the school was 78-111 with a 30-80 mark in ACC regular-season games.

Briefly

Wake Forest fires Manning after 5 losing seasons in 6

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Danny Manning never built a winner at Wake Forest. Now the school is looking for a new coach and direction.

Wake Forest fired Manning on Saturday after losing seasons in five of his six years with one NCAA Tournament appearance. The move came more than six weeks after the Demon Deacons lost to Pittsburgh in the opening game of the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament, ending the season shortly before the coronavirus pandemic led to a shutdown of college and professional sports.

"The decision came after what athletic director John Currie called an 'overall evaluation' of a program with two winning seasons in the past decade going back to the days of Jeff Zedelik."

"As time goes by, we're able to resume things," Currie said Saturday in a video teleconference.

"We never stopped working on this particular program because it is so important to all of us, just like we haven't stopped with the day-to-day duties. ... But certainly the onset of the pandemic played a role in the timing of today's announcement."

Manning, a former No. 1 overall NBA draft pick, went 78-111 at the school with a 30-80 mark in ACC regular-season games. Those league struggles included a 6-49 mark in league road games and 1-6 in the ACC Tournament.

Official: Manfred had hand in ump's removal

NEW YORK — A major league official testified he suggested Angel Hernández be removed from consideration for the 2015 World Series because he did not think Commissioner Rob Manfred would approve the umpire to work baseball's premier event.

Hernández sued Major League Baseball in 2017, alleging race discrimination and cited his failure to be assigned to the World

Series since 2005 and MLB's failure to promote him to crew chief.

Documents and depositions from pretrial discovery were filed late Friday night and early Saturday.

Scully returns home after hospital stay

LOS ANGELES — Retired Los Angeles Dodgers broadcaster Vin Scully is back home after falling and being hospitalized.

The team quoted Scully on Twitter Saturday saying, "I'm home and resting comfortably with my wife and we are both eagerly awaiting the Time for Dodger Baseball!" That's a phrase announced before the start of every Dodgers home game.

The 92-year-old fell Tuesday at his Los Angeles-area home.

NCAA won't waive D. I sport requirement

The NCAA Division I Council denied a request to temporarily waive the minimum number of sports required to be a Division I member and delayed a decision on allowing all college athletes to be immediately eligible one time after transferring.

The NCAA announced Friday night that a request made recently by five FBS conference commissioners to waive numerous Division I requirements for up to four years would be considered in the coming weeks. But a blanket waiver permitting schools to drop below the minimum 16 sports would only be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Louisville football signee fatally shot

ORLANDO, Fla. — A star high school football player from Florida who had signed to play for the University of Louisville was fatally shot late Saturday, Orlando police said. Dexter Renteria tied a state record in 2017 when he intercepted five passes in a game.

Open: Move allows NBA players a chance to return to practice courts on limited basis

FROM BACK PAGE

began loosening restrictions on personal movement, the NBA decided it was time to let players return to their practice courts — if only on a limited basis. Georgia and Oklahoma are among the states that have allowed some businesses to reopen and some cities in Florida are expected to loosen their stay-at-home policies in the coming days, even though health officials are warning that such moves are being made too quickly.

For those teams in cities where stay-at-home orders still make such a return impossible, the NBA said it would work to find "alternative arrangements," the person with knowledge of the matter said.

"This move does not mean that a resumption of games is imminent. Still, the decision to let teams back into facilities is a significant step."

ESPN first reported details of the NBA's decision.

In the NHL, suspended at about the same point of the season as the NBA, Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said league officials "haven't made any decisions yet." Daly said only the NHL owes players and teams guidance courts April 30 and will consider its next steps in that context.

Many NBA players have said they haven't even

had access to a basket since the league ordered teams to close their practice facilities on March 19. All-Star Jimmy Butler sent baskets to his Miami Heat teammates earlier this month, but some other players around the league said they haven't even touched a basketball during the shutdown.

If they're so inclined, that can now change. There remains no indicator about when a full-fledged return to organized team workouts will resume, however.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver has said on several occasions that the league does not anticipate being able to decide until sometime in May — at the earliest — if a resumption of the season is possible.

The NBA suspended the season March 11. It ordered teams to shutter their facilities eight days later, saying at the time it was doing so "in light of the rapidly-developing coronavirus situation, and consistent with evolving advice from health experts regarding how to promote individual and public health while minimizing the spread of the virus."

Johns Hopkins University, which tracks the numbers of those affected or killed by the virus based off official government figures, said the COVID-19 worldwide death toll surpassed 200,000 on Saturday. And the World Health Organization said "there is currently no evidence" that people who have recovered from the virus cannot fall sick again.

SPORTS



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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Open gym

NBA players will be allowed to use team facilities in some states

By Tim Reynolds
Associated Press

MIAMI

NBA players will be allowed to return to team training facilities starting Friday, provided that their local governments do not have a stay-at-home

order prohibiting such movement still in place as part of the response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Any workouts that take place would be voluntary and be limited to individual sessions only, according to a person familiar with the league's decision. The person spoke to The Associated Press on Sat-

urday on the condition of anonymity because the directives from the league were not released publicly.

Group practices would not be allowed yet, and teams will not yet be permitted to organize in-person workouts.

But as certain states and municipalities

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TO OUR READERS

As the sports world pauses to join the rest of the world in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, you will see fewer sports stories in Stars and Stripes. We look forward to resuming our normal coverage when the leagues and governing bodies determine it is safe for athletes and fans to return to competition.

